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JUNE
VOLUME 24, No. 7 • 1998
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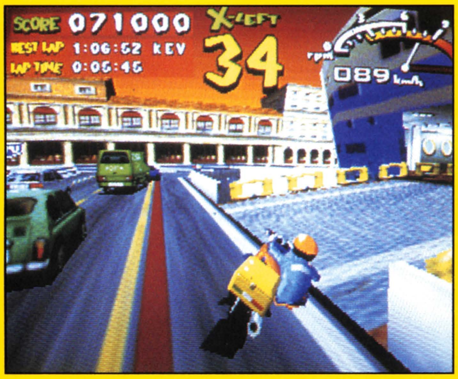
News BULLETIN

ATARI SHIPPING *RADIKAL BIKERS*

Atari Games Corp. is shipping its new upright driving game, *Radikal Bikers*, this month. The game pits players against the clock in a wild race to deliver pizza. Atari's marketing overseer Mary Fujihara commented, "Distributors, operators, and players have all been clamoring for something different. *Radikal Bikers* is just what the market ordered." An in-depth look at the game will follow in the next issue.



JERRY GORDON JOINS JVL

Long-time industry veteran Jerry Gordon has been appointed executive vice president of JVL, manufacturer of the *Concorde* countertop game. Gordon started in the industry in 1956 as a partner in National Shuffleboard, left in 1960 to work for Betson, and was there until 1983 when he was recruited by Rowe International. He retired from Rowe in 1996 to become a marketing executive with Bally's Park Place Casino. All of his industry friends welcome him back.

AAMA ANNOUNCES OFFICERS, AWARDS

At its annual May board of directors meeting in Chicago, the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) unanimously re-elected this slate of officers: Mike Rudowicz of Konami of America, president; Rich Babich of Colorado Game Exchange, vice president; Frank Cosentino of Namco America, secretary; Joe Sladek of Skee-Ball Inc., treasurer; Dick Shelton of Valley Recreation Products, assistant secretary; and Ron Carrara of Lazer-Tron, assistant treasurer.

In addition to these officers, AAMA re-elected current board members Ralph Coppola of ICE, Al Stone of Sega GameWorks, and John Gatens of Southgate Amusements to another term. Joining them for the 1998-2001 term is Rachel Davies of Midway Games. Board alternates are Sal Mirando of Coastal Amusements and John Margold of TouchTunes Digital Jukebox.

Prior to the election, Rudowicz presented ongoing board members with plaques and thanked them for their service. Board members whose terms expired were Babich, Coppola, Gatens, Rudowicz, Stone, and Mark Struhs of Dynamo Ltd. Members remaining on the board are Frank Cosentino, Dave Capilouto of Greater Southern Distributing, Joe Sladek, Ron Carrara, Dick Shelton, Al Kress of Benchmark Amusements, Richard Ditton of Incredible Technologies, and Steve Koenigsberg of State Sales & Service. Rick Kirby of New England Coin-Op remains on the Past President's Council.

AAMA honored two members for dedication to the association's activities and the industry as a whole: Al Kress received the President's Award and Ron Carrara received the Joe Robbins Award at the annual dinner. Rudowicz said of Kress: "Al is a dedicated member who goes the extra mile to ensure that AAMA programs are successful." Executive director Bob Fay said of Carrara, "Ron has taken an active role in developing trade missions and foreign trade shows. Without his dedication and support, many of these programs would not have come into existence."

Also at the annual meeting, the American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation (AAMCF) elected Todd Cravens of Bulldog Amusements to its board of directors. He joins other re-elected board members Steve Koenigsberg, Frank Ballouz, Rick Kirby, Stuart Heller of Kiddie Rides USA, Ed Urich of Advanced Mfg. and Development, and Joe Robbins of Sega Enterprises.

WELLS-GARDNER TO BUY COIN DOOR BUSINESS

Wells-Gardner Electronics Corp. has entered into a letter of intent to acquire certain assets of Coin Controls Inc.'s coin door business. Coin Controls is the United States subsidiary of Coin Controls Limited in the United Kingdom. "The coin door business would complement our current product offerings to our customers in the amusement market," said Wells-Gardner CEO Anthony Spier. "We would be acquiring the worldwide manufacturing, engineering, and distribution rights to the coin door products and will integrate these operations into our Chicago facility."

Wells-Gardner, which predicted additional annualized sales of up to $5 million, expected the acquisition to close by the end of May. Due diligence continues in Wells-Gardner's proposed acquisition of Data Ray Corp. Wells-Gardner is an open-frame monitor manufacturer with sales in the amusement, gaming, leisure, automotive, Intranet, and video wall markets. For more information, check out the company's Web site, (http://www.wgec.com).

INTERACTIVE LIGHT TO INTRODUCE *KICK-IT JR.*

Following on the heels of its soccer simulator game *Kick-It's* success both in the United States and abroad, Interactive Light has announced plans to introduce a smaller version of the game for younger players. Company CEO Amir Rubin told *Play Meter* the decision was prompted by requests from children's entertainment center locations, which were interested in *Kick-It* but needed a smaller-scale version of the attraction. "Sixty-seven percent of the kids that play sports in this country, play soccer," Rubin said. "The locations said we would love to buy the game but we need a smaller ball and lowered monitor." For more on Interactive Light, see this month's "Company Profile" on the Arcade PC pioneer.

CHICAGO OPERATORS FIGHT CITY ORDINANCE

Chicago operators are embattled against a repressive ordinance enacted in late April by the City of Chicago. Set to take effect last month, the law would render illegal with the city any device that includes a knock-off circuit, allows more than 10 replays, maintains a count of payoffs or the number of times a person has won a game played on the device, or maintains a tally of players' scores other than the tally displayed to players. The ordinance did make exceptions for cranes and redemption machines as defined under Illinois state law. A 70-member association of operators, the Independent Amusement Operators Association, resorted to the courts soon after the ordinance was published and has been successful in obtaining an injunction against the city. Association members expect the city to modify its ordinance to get around the injunction, setting off a new round of litigation.

Namco visits Canadian Coin's open house

TIME CRISIS II
RELOAD
Flick Derby
TICKETS
1ST
2ND
3RD

David Swafford sent us these photos taken at Canadian Coin's open house which followed the Amusement Showcase International in March. David said that *Flick Derby* and *Time Crisis II,* shown in these two photos, were hits with the Canadian Coin guests.

REDEMPTION REFORM FAILS IN MISSOURI

A Missouri Senate bill that would have reformed an antiquated criminal gambling prohibition failed to pass in the state's House of Representatives as the regular legislative session came to a close last month. Under the proposed bill: "The term gambling device does not include a game or an amusement device that confers only an immediate right of replay, non-cash prizes, toys, novelties, coupons, or other representations of value which may be redeemed on the premises for something of value in the form of prizes, toys, novelties but shall specifically exclude cash, intoxicating beer or liquor, non-intoxicating beer or tobacco products. The something of value shall not thereafter be sold or transferred for cash or any other consideration. An amusement device shall not be identical in purpose to casino games which have the purpose of cash payout."

During the legislative session, which saw the bill pass out of the Senate and report out of committee in the House, the proposal was crafted from two separate proposals, one having to do with antique slot machines and another addressing the regulation of riverboat gaming. While the items proved to be controversial, the bill received over 50 votes in the House, some 30 short of the number needed for passage.

NAMCO CYBERTAINMNET FILES REORGANIZATION

A Chapter 11-reorganization plan submitted by Namco Cybertainment Inc. would pay creditors 100 cents on the dollar, according to company president Kevin Hayes. The plan was submitted to the bankruptcy court in Delaware, where the company is registered and filed bankruptcy. The reorganization has allowed the company to renegotiate the lion's share of its current leases–the stated goal of the bankruptcy proceeding–and Hayes said he expects the process to be concluded by the end of the summer. Hayes also said he is confident that creditors will accept the proposal. "It's all part of the process although this is a major event from a legal standpoint," he added.

SELLOUT E3 HELD IN ATLANTA

The fourth Electronic Entertainment Expo was held May 27-30 in Atlanta, showcasing the latest in interactive entertainment, educational software, and related products. Show organizers announced in late April that exhibit and meeting space was sold out, matching last year's record of 534,000 square feet. In addition to exhibits, E3 featured a wide range of conferences and seminars as well as a keynote panel of CEOs from major companies like Microsoft, Interplay, Sony, Nintendo, and Electronic Arts. Among the sessions looking at advancements in technology was one entitled Location-Based Entertainment: The Return of the Arcade. Look for more coverage of E3 in next month's "Through the Looking Glass" column in *Play Meter.*

KEYSTONE LAUNCHES POKERMANIA

Keystone Game Supply introduces its newest product, *PokerMania,* that incorporates eight different poker games into one game board and gives the operator the flexibility to better meet the needs of various locations. According to Keystone president Jim Chaney, "*PokerMania* represents the next generation of amusement game. It also gives the operator a game with much longer life, which in turn gives the operator a much better return on his investment." ▲

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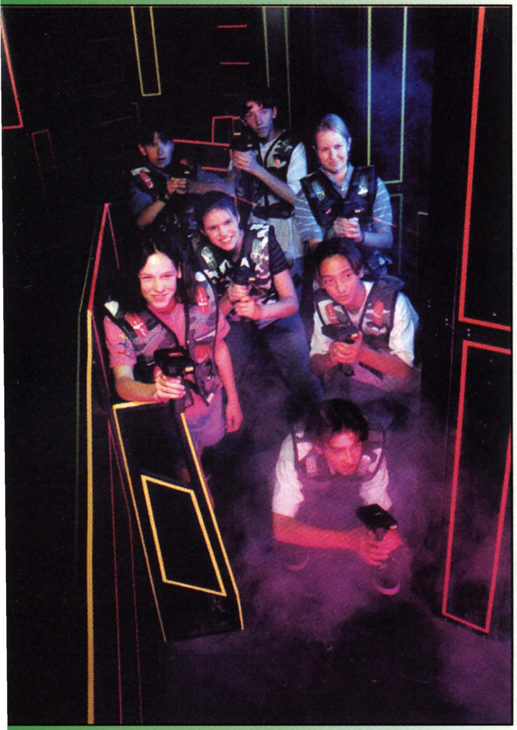

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COVER

The small company that introduced the *Chexx* hockey game 16 years ago has blossomed into one of the major industry players providing a continuous stream of games in categories from video and sports to cranes and coin pushers. The company took its name to heart—Innovative Concepts in Entertainment. One of its most popular games is the *Plush Bus* all-metal crane with a three-point door locking security system.

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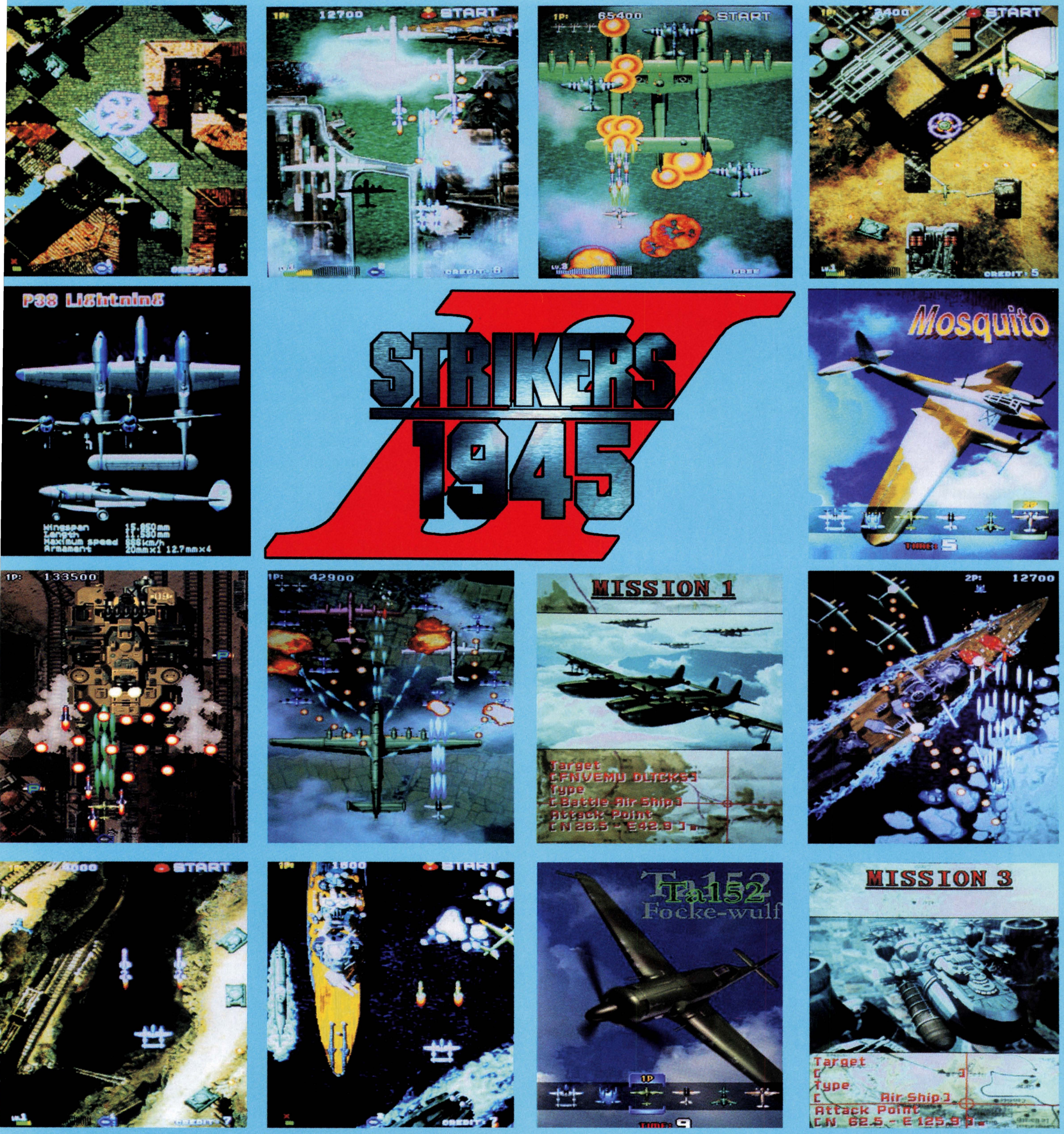
STRIKERS 1945 II



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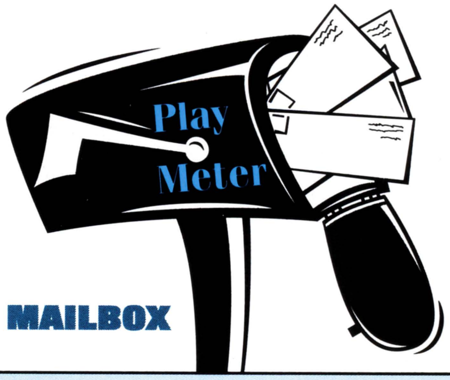

MAILBOX

Hard drive woes?

I had to write to someone to see if I am the only one who feels this way. I had to replace my hard drive in an *Area 51*, no great chore or expensive item since this is just a regular computer hard drive, right? Was I ever wrong! A $700 hard drive? I thought this had to be wrong, but I was told that's the price. If this is what we are going to be facing with computers replacing dedicated boards in our games, count me out.

I can see it now: A computer that off the shelf in a computer store costs $2,000 will end up costing an operator $5,000 from a manufacturer in a cabinet that costs another $1,000 and we will be told it's a bargain because it's cheaper than the $18,000 simulators.

I thought that using computer components was supposed to lower our costs. I know I can buy a hard drive for less than $700. In fact, you can buy one for $139, then go over and buy the home version of *Area 51*, and still it's cheaper than $700. When are we going to see reasonably priced equipment again?

Kevin Mahler
Western Music & Vending
Twin Falls, ID

Editor's note: Kevin, I've heard your concerns from others. We'd like to hear some response from other operators or from manufacturers who can explain why using computer components will, indeed, be beneficial to operators. You can e-mail us at (news@playmeter.com). ▲

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70 TICKETS
80 TICKETS

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90 TICKETS
100 TICKETS
125 TICKETS
HARMONICA
HARMONICA
HARMONICA
150 TICKETS
175 TICKETS
200 TICKETS

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250
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Use it or lose it

We mentioned the topic of parental advisory stickers briefly in the ASI wrap-up coverage last month, but I want to devote my editorial to it this time for reasons that will be obvious. There have been some horrendous tragedies that were all the more devastating because they involved children—some preteens. The most recent happened in Jonesboro, Ark., where an 11- and 13-year-old went on a shooting rampage against their fellow students. Four young girls and a teacher were murdered and several others were injured.

Valerie Cognevich
Editor

Before that incident, another teenager murdered his mother and then calmly drove her car to school where he continued the carnage. It's almost too hard to comprehend when young children resort to murder. Children should be safe in school, their biggest challenge learning to multiply by eight, not how to survive a barrage of gunfire. As hard as it is to believe such events could be thought out by children, it's even more chilling when we grapple with reasons why. It's not in our realm of reason and reality to lay the blame squarely on young shoulders. We must find culpability somewhere else.

And herein lies a challenge for the coin-op industry. In a recent issue of *Time* magazine, the Jonesboro disaster was the cover story complete with interviews with the children's parents and an assortment of "experts." The cover featured a photo of a very young Andrew Golden, the 11-year-old, dressed in miniature army fatigues and holding a rifle. The image was of a boy barely out of toddlerhood that any parent would burst with pride to call their own. Who knew then that the boy in the photo would become a haunting figure as experts rallied to discover what snapped in his mind just five years later?

But among the images burned into the readers' minds were two video game screens lit up with characters programmed to kill or maim featured in the main story. The article clearly associates violence in youngsters with what they watch on TV and play on TV screens.

As if that exposure was not bad enough, an April 1 *USA Today* article titled "More Ammo for Video Game Critics" heaped more blame on the images kids see on video screens. It quoted Sen. Joseph Lieberman, an outspoken critic of violent games, as taking a cautious stance in the Jonesboro tragedy. But in the past he has been quite forthright in his opinion about video games' impact. He was quoted in an earlier interview, "It seems logical that kids who play violent video games and get rewarded for all sorts of violence at a young age have a probability of growing up to be more violent."

It spells trouble for the coin machine industry. The aftermath of any tragedy falls in many directions. When kids are involved, our industry is a major target. But as an industry we have a rare opportunity to show legislators that we are just as concerned about what youngsters are playing. This industry serves children, and no industry is more concerned about the effect of their products on America's youth. However, although manufacturers tell you that some of their games are not designed for pre-teens, in reality there's been little done to make sure they aren't playing them.

As an industry, we're fooling ourselves if we think it's up to parents alone to monitor what their kids play in game rooms. Parents simply aren't game players for the most part and wouldn't know *Mortal Kombat* from *Tetris* as far as what goes on. Those parents who still think of *Pac-Man* as the ultimate video game would be shocked at the realistic action taking place. That's where the parental advisory stickers (or ultimately the message designed into games' artwork) come in. At least give the moms and dads a chance to see which games are strictly off limits for younger players. Some may not be concerned about their offspring beheading a few bad guys, but give a break to those who feel it's their duty to care.

We certainly don't want legislative action dictating rules for us. We may think that posting a red, yellow, or green sticker is a pain in the neck. What will we think when we're posting signs that say "no one under 18 allowed in this game room?" Makes you shudder to think of it, doesn't it? ▲

We want to hear from you about any of the articles in this issue or topics you'd like to see.

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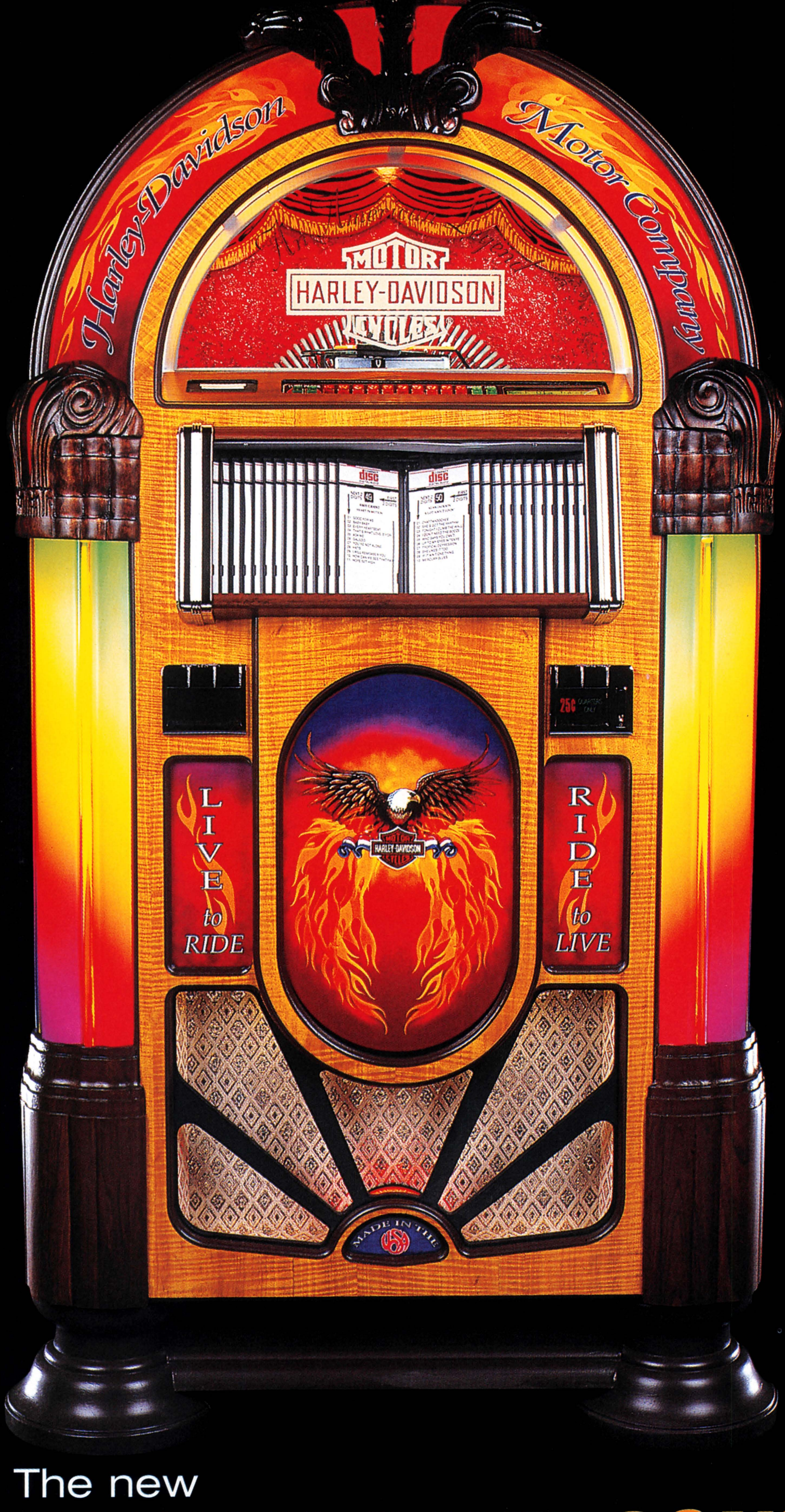
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Equipment Poll

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2. NFL Blitz *(Midway)*	8.32	338	44.44
3. Point Blank *(Namco)*	8.07	788	11.11
4. Tekken 3 *(Namco)*	7.92	676	56.30
5. Marvel vs. Capcom *(Capcom)*	7.87	132	28.15
6. Surf Planet *(Atari)*	7.83	82	13.33
7. Golden Tee '97 *(Incred. Tech.)*	7.50	537	50.37
8. Area 51 *(Atari)*	7.46	1465	69.63
9. Golden Tee 3D Golf *(Incred. Tech)*	7.33	1329	31.85
10. Metal Slug 2 *(SNK)*	7.27	22	19.26
11. Police Trainer *(P&P)*	7.21	499	48.89
12. Strikers 1945 Part 2 *(Worldwide)*	7.14	100	10.37
13. Bust-A-Move Again *(Taito)*	7.07	566	11.11
14. Ehrgeiz *(Namco)--tie*	6.83	25	8.89
14. Street Fighter EX *(Capcom)*–tie	6.83	25	8.89
15. Super Puzzle Fighter II *(Capcom)*	6.80	60	3.70
16. Metal Slug *(SNK)*	6.69	422	33.33
17. Raiden DX *(Fabtek)*	6.68	348	14.07
18. Marvel Heroes vs SF *(Capcom)*	6.67	189	35.56
19. S.F. III 2nd Impact *(Capcom)*	6.62	0	9.63
20. 19XX *(Capcom)*--tie	6.50	95	8.89
20. Raiden Fighters *(Fabtek)--tie*	6.50	107	20.74
21. Tekken 2 *(Namco)*	6.46	1037	41.48
22. D&D Shadow Over Mystara *(Capcom)*	6.38	201	5.93
23. Die Hard Arcade *(Sega)*	6.32	430	34.81
24. Beastorizer *(Namco)*	6.30	0	7.41
25. Lethal Enforcers *(Konami)*	6.27	1618	44.44
26. Great 1000 Mile Rally 2 *(Kaneko)*–tie	6.20	44	11.11
26. Tournament Solitaire *(Dynamo)--tie*	6.20	678	7.41
27. Bust-A-Move *(SNK)*	6.18	483	42.22

VIDEO DEDICATED

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
1. House of the Dead *(Sega)*	8.58	626	22.96
2. Golden Tee '98 *(Incred. Tech.)*	7.94	73	23.70
3. Maximum Force *(Atari)*	7.58	572	52.59
4. Tourn. 3D Golf *(Incred. Tech)*	7.46	709	20.74
5. Gun Blade NY *(Sega)*	7.17	883	13.33
6. Virtua Cop 2 *(Sega)*	6.48	900	20.00
7. Time Crisis *(Namco)*	6.43	989	17.04
8. Solitaire Challenge *(Dynamo)*	6.38	1473	15.56
9. Rampage World Tour *(Midway)*	6.23	80	22.96
10. Virtual On *(Sega)*	6.11	151	14.07
11. Mortal Kombat 4 *(Midway)*	5.81	168	39.26
12. Killer Instinct 2 *(Midway)*	5.42	305	42.22
13. Run and Gun 2 *(Konami)*	5.38	72	17.78
14. Virtua Fighter 2 *(Sega)*	5.30	930	17.04
15. Virtua Fighter 3 *(Sega)*	5.18	154	12.59

VIDEO SIMULATORS

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
1. The Lost World: J. Park *(Sega)*	9.16	357	18.52
2. Top Skater *(Sega)*	8.81	595	15.56
3. Harley Davidson/LA Riders *(Sega)*	8.50	110	17.78
4. Cruis'n World *(Midway)*	8.46	971	60.00
5. San Francisco Rush: Rock *(Atari)*	8.31	336	28.89
6. California Speed *(Atari)*	8.29	109	25.93
7. Alpine Racer 2 *(Namco)*	8.08	728	19.26
8. Wave Runner *(Sega)*	7.92	634	9.63
9. Off Road Challenge *(Midway)*	7.75	395	35.56
10. San Francisco Rush *(Atari)*	7.61	838	34.07
11. Cruis'n USA *(Midway)*	7.53	2312	58.52
12. Daytona USA *(Sega)*	7.48	2466	41.48
13. Sega Super GT *(Sega)*	7.44	411	6.67
14. Alpine Racer *(Namco)*	7.19	1321	11.85
15. Tokyo Wars *(Namco)*	7.00	383	9.63
16. Aqua Jet *(Namco)*	6.57	451	5.19
17. Daytona USA Limited *(Sega)*	6.55	355	8.15
18. Cyber Cycles *(Namco)*	6.53	997	12.59
19. Home Run Derby *(ICE)*	6.50	282	4.44
20. Manx TT *(Sega)*	6.45	630	14.81
21. Sega Rally *(Sega)*	6.44	788	6.67
22. Suzuka 8 Hours 2 *(Namco)*	6.41	1553	16.30
23. Alpine Surfer *(Namco)*	6.27	507	8.15
24. OutRunners *(Sega)*	6.20	1774	14.81
25. Wave Shark *(Konami)*	6.14	231	5.19

What the numbers mean:

Point Value—An average of the ratings that operators give each game they circle (on a scale of 3-10) on their Equipment Poll ballots.

Longevity Points—Awarded after compiling a list of the top 60 videos and pinballs (combined) and compiling the top 60 redemption games (all categories combined). The #1 game gets 60 points, the #2 game gets 59 points, on down to the #60 game that gets 1 point. The higher the longevity points the better the "legs" of the game.

Percentage of Response—Amount of respondents who rated the games; another barometer of game success.

✳ New or reappearing games ✳✳Play Meter 1997 Reader Survey

The Irritating Maze™

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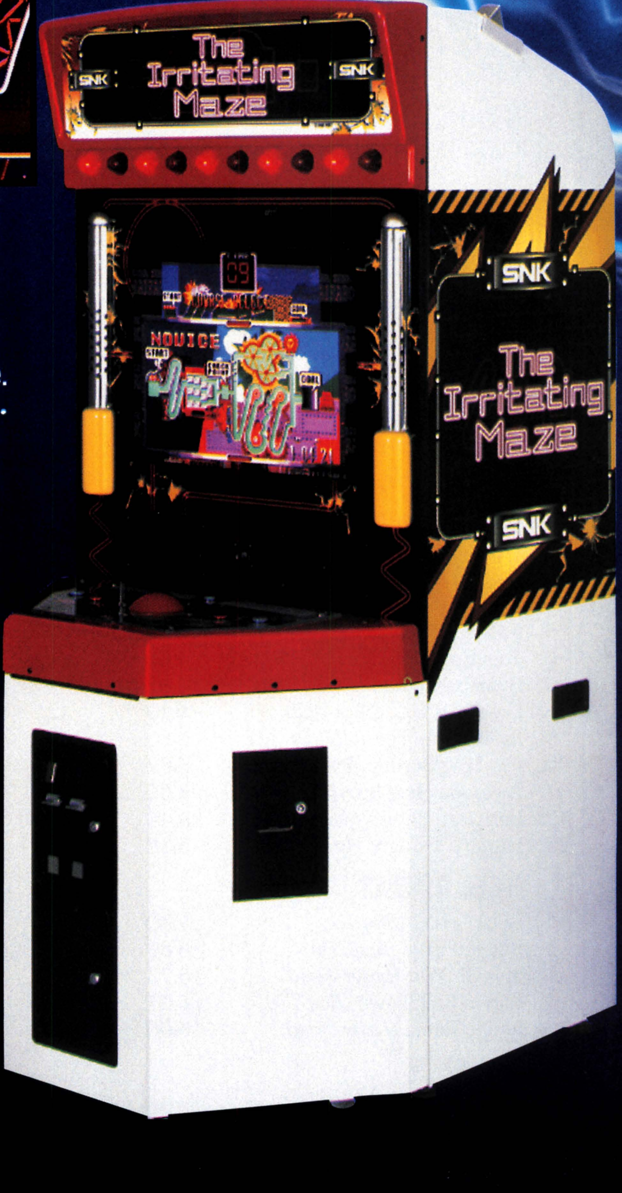

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PLAY METER

Equipment Poll

REDEMPTION

ALLEY BOWLERS

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
1. Pro Striker *(Design PLus)*	7.83	195	4.44
2. ICE Ball *(ICE)*	7.79	846	10.37
3. Skee-Ball Too! *(Skee-Ball)*	7.00	566	4.44
4. Skee-Ball Lightning *(Skee-Ball)*	6.89	1024	6.67
5. Skee-Ball Classic *(Skee-Ball)*	6.80	795	22.22

SPORTS GAMES

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
1. Full Court Fever *(ICE)*	7.60	813	7.41
2. Hoop It Up *(Atari)*	7.03	1067	21.48
3. Full Court Frenzy *(ICE)*	6.95	473	14.07
4. Super Shot *(Skee-Ball)*	6.80	836	3.70
5. Shoot to Win *(Smart)*	6.67	659	13.33
6. Hoop Shot *(ICE)*	6.55	289	8.15
7. Slugfest *(Williams)*	6.04	7	18.52
8. UB-QB Football *(Skee-Ball)*	5.58	127	14.07
9. Putting Challenge II *(G.L. Tech.)*	5.40	51	3.70

CRANES/ROTARIES

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
1. Classic Watch Crane *(Smart)*	8.42	908	8.89
2. Mission Crane *(Mission Crane)*	7.80	64	3.70
3. Rainbow *(Rainbow)*	7.73	1196	11.11
4. Lax *(Noel Industries)*	7.29	35	10.37
5. Plush Bus *(ICE)*	7.17	81	4.44
6. Jumbo Crane *(Grayhound)*	7.10	722	7.41
7. Candy Man *(Fun Merchants)*	7.00	264	4.44
8. Clean Sweep *(Smart)*	6.92	1101	28.15
9. Big Choice *(Fun Merchants)*	6.86	764	16.30
10. Skill Crane *(Grayhound)*	6.50	393	11.85
11. Candy Crane *(Smart)*	6.21	489	28.89
12. Pit Stop *(Smart)*	6.20	144	3.70

CHILD-SIZE GAMES

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
1. Smart Toss Em *(Smart)*	7.50	790	4.44
2. Mini Dunx *(ICE)*	7.40	291	3.70
3. Hightops *(Skee-Ball)*	7.00	197	3.70
4. Bozo Grand Prize *(ICE)*	6.88	55	5.93
5. Shoot To Win! Jr. *(Smart)*	6.85	781	9.63
6. Toss Em *(UETD)*	6.60	262	3.70
7. Bozo Basketball *(Design Plus)*	6.38	98	5.93
8. Skee-Toss B.C. *(Skee-Ball)*	6.10	12	7.41
9. Jr. All American *(UETD)*	5.83	55	4.44
10. Feed Big Bertha *(Smart)*	5.82	309	16.30
11. Awesome Toss 'Em *(Lazer-Tron)*	5.60	126	3.70
12. Barnyard Babies *(Skee-Ball)*	5.40	37	3.70
13. Hungry, Hungry Hippos *(ICE)*	5.36	26	8.15

ROLL DOWNS

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
1. Rock N Roll *(Bay Tek)*	7.20	115	3.70
2. Jungle Picnic *(Bay Tek)*	6.80	14	3.70
3. Spin To Win *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.73	918	16.30
4. Clown Roll Down *(Bay Tek)*	6.67	191	8.89
5. Jungle Rama *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.00	364	4.44

NOVELTY

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
1. Solar Spin *(Lazer-Tron)*	9.00	649	3.70
2. Cyclone *(ICE)*	8.98	1759	33.33
3. Cyclone Jr. *(ICE)*	8.50	1015	4.44
4. Claim Jumper *(Benchmark)*	8.29	112	5.19
5. Surfin' Safari *(5 Star)*	8.14	539	5.19
6. Dinoscore *(Planet Earth)*	8.07	1471	20.74
7. Twister *(Lazer-Tron)*	7.78	129	6.67
8. Colorama *(Bromley)*	7.70	1319	7.41
9. Treasure Falls *(Planet Earth)*	7.64	1000	8.15
10. Round 'n Round *(Astro)*	7.38	973	5.93
11. Flip N Win *(Planet Earth)--tie*	7.20	506	3.70
11. Super Solar Spin *(Lazer-Tron)--tie*	7.20	68	3.70
12. Prize Zone *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.40	337	11.11
13. Killer T-Rex *(Smart)*	6.20	194	3.70
14. Turbo Ticket *(Exidy)*	6.00	0	4.44
15. Simple Simon *(Sammy USA)*	5.88	131	5.93
16. Pop-A-Tac-Toe *(Coastal)*	5.83	46	4.44
17. Steer Crazy *(Fun Industries)*	5.67	170	4.44
18. Hop-A-Tic-Tac-Toe *(Data East)*	5.62	46	19.26
19. Buddy Bear *(Smart)*	5.60	192	3.70
20. Dump the Ump *(ICE)*	5.54	120	9.63
21. Pop-A-Ball *(Coastal)*	5.50	84	13.33
22. Cosmo Gang *(Data East)*	5.25	2	8.89
23. Pop-A-Slot *(Coastal)*	5.20	311	3.70

COIN DROP GAMES

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
1. Big Haul *(Benchmark)*	8.44	1033	20.00
2. Smokin' Token *(Seidel)*	7.59	1449	20.00
3. Home Run Hitter *(CCI)--tie*	7.50	624	7.41
3. Super Bank It II *(Lazer-Tron)--tie*	7.50	279	4.44
4. Screamin' Slopes *(Midway)*	7.44	338	6.67
5. Wheel 'M In *(Bromley)*	7.43	1339	20.74
6. Goin' Rollin' *(Seidel)*	7.17	1018	4.44
7. Addams Family Values *(Midway)*	7.14	355	5.19
8. The Mask *(Data East)*	7.10	798	7.41
9. Aftershock *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.89	593	6.67
10. Roll For Gold *(Benchmark)*	6.80	386	7.41
11. Rock-N-Bowl *(Bromley)*	6.75	498	23.70
12. Coin Circus *(Sammy USA)*	6.64	306	10.37
13. Cut the Cheese *(Sega)*	6.40	664	7.41

GUN GAMES

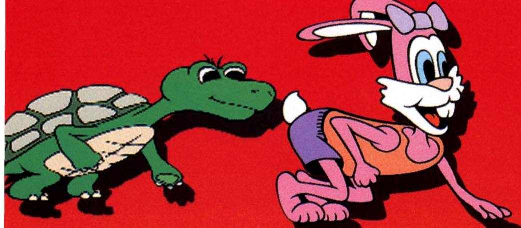
GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
1. Knock-Down *(Meltec)*	6.44	116	6.67
2. Miner's Revenge *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.43	174	5.19
3. Big Mouth *(Meltec)*	5.36	149	8.15
4. Boom Ball *(Meltec)*	5.00	17	3.70

BOPPING/STOMPING GAMES

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
1. Spider Stompin *(Island)*	7.47	1212	12.59
2. Circus Hi-Rise *(Skee-Ball)*	7.00	256	5.93
3. Ribbit Racin *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.78	872	20.00
4. Wacky Gator *(Data East)*	6.71	482	25.93
5. Spider Splattin' *(Island)*	6.43	171	5.19
6. Cracky Crab *(Namco)*	6.17	203	8.89
7. Swamp Stomp *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.00	592	5.19

continued on next page

Play Meter 1997 Reader Survey



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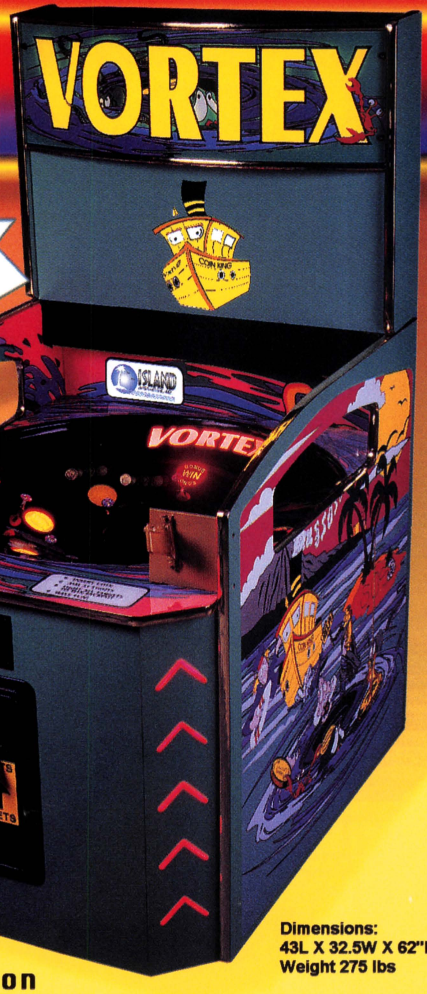

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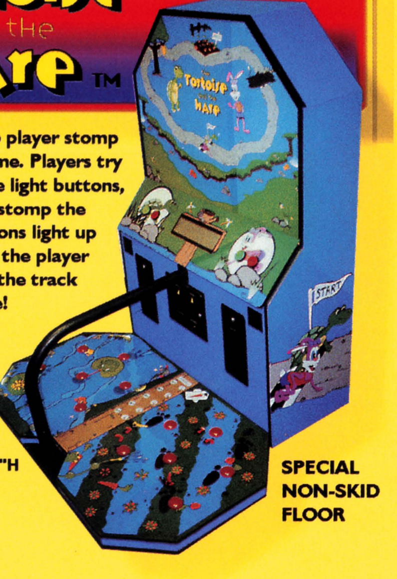

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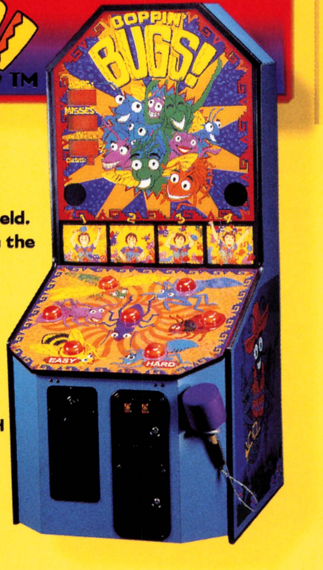

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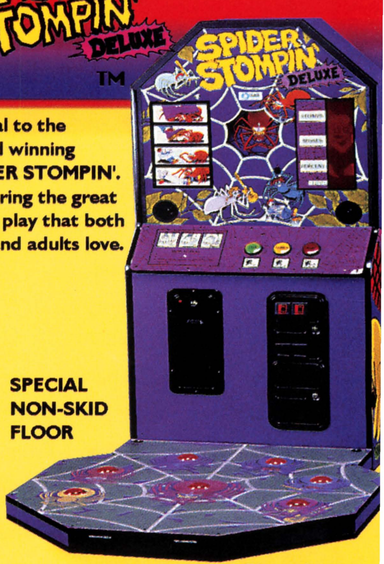

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PLAY METER

Equipment Poll

PRIZE VENDORS

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
1.	Sports Arena *(Sammy USA)*	8.50	✷	14.8
2.	Key Catcher *(Sammy USA)--tie*	8.00	✷	.04
2.	Super Hoop La *(Coastal)--tie*	8.00	✷	.02
3.	Kick n Catch *(Fun Industries)*	5.43	✷	.05

PINBALLS

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
1.	Viper Night Drivin' *(Sega)*	8.80	58	7.41
2.	Medieval Madness *(Williams)*	8.25	467	29.63
3.	No Good Golfers *(Williams)*	7.53	110	12.59
4.	Theatre of Magic *(Bally)--tie*	7.39	1387	37.78
4.	X-Files *(Sega)--tie*	7.39	117	17.04
5.	Attack From Mars *(Bally)*	7.38	1164	31.11
6.	Arabian Nights *(Williams)*	7.14	540	20.74
7.	Junk Yard *(Williams)*	7.10	312	22.22
8.	The Addams Family *(Bally)*	7.04	3533	54.07
9.	Scared Stiff *(Bally)*	6.88	719	29.63
10.	Star Wars Trilogy *(Sega)*	6.76	194	18.52
11.	Star Trek: TNG *(Williams)*	6.69	1748	36.30
12.	Pinball Magic *(Capcom)*	6.53	221	11.11
13	Independence Day *(Sega)*	6.44	290	11.85
14.	Cirqus Voltaire *(Bally)*	6.42	37	14.07

COUNTERTOPS

1.	Megatouch XL *(Merit)*	8.70	734	41.48
2.	Megatouch Tournament *(Merit)*	7.91	761	8.15
3.	Megatouch 5 *(Merit)*	7.76	372	30.37
4.	Touchmaster *(Williams)*	7.44	690	18.52
5.	Megatouch IV *(Merit)*	7.38	1166	31.11
6.	Magical Touch 3 *(Micro)*	7.30	149	7.41
7.	Megatouch *(Merit)*	7.05	999	15.56

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

What is your most popular pool table?

#1 Valley Recreation Products (Cougar ZD-7)
#2 Dynamo Ltd. (Top Brass)
#3 Great American Billiards (Eagle)

In order to accommodate the influx of new games on the ballot we are discontinuing the Classic Video category. All-time favorites such as *Ms Pac-Man* are universally recognized and will always have a dedicated following. We applaud the impact these classics have had on the industry; they have earned a place in the Coin-Op Hall of Fame.

Due to the popularity of the new Prize Vendors we have added a category for that equipment.

The biggest difference you'll notice is the price.

You may notice a difference in the wood grain laminate and the corner design. But operators won't notice any difference in durability. And players won't notice any difference in playability. Because both tables have the most important thing in common. Valley quality.

TORNADO
2000

TORNADO
1000

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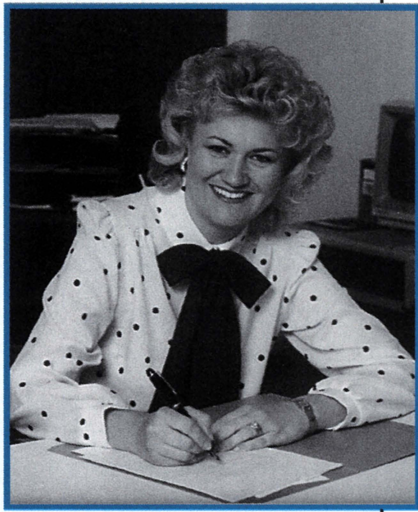
Time is right for VALUE-ADDED concept

In Louisiana we call it lagniappe—a little extra—similar to the baker's dozen. The concept of added value is not new. In our competitive world every business wants to stand out in the crowd, and creative marketing strategies are being employed to gain recognition and subsequently customers.

A lagniappe-type promotion at the Blockbuster Video store nearest my home benefits both the consumer and the retailer. When a customer rents a brand-new release, if he returns it by 8 p.m. the next evening he gets $1 off a rental that night plus a pack of microwave popcorn. The customer gets the popcorn and a discount on another video; the store gets a second rental it might not have gotten, along with the ability to re-rent that quickly returned video. The cost of the popcorn is minimal. Everyone gets something, especially Blockbuster, because the customer may not have intended to rent another video. With that $1 discount it becomes an attractive idea that's easy to justify. An example of good marketing and creative pricing at work.



Bargains make people happy. I can remember the impact of a citywide retail store sale that was called Community Bargain Days. Going to the Bargain Days with my mother was a major event complete with jostling and grabbing at greatly-reduced clothes piled high on tables in the aisles—a scene fit for an "I Love Lucy" episode. Later, when I was older and writing radio commercials for one of the stores participating in the Bargain Days, I remember seeing the faces of bargain hunters pressed up against the big glass doors of the downtown store moments before the official opening. It was both exciting and scary. Once the doors were open it was time to get out of the way!

The notion of bargains and extra value plays well with the public which has fallen in love with outlet malls and discount retailers. Every type of business can benefit from carefully planned promotions and the perception of a bargain. You don't have to give away the store. However, you have to do something to generate repeat business.

One of this month's features concerns debit card systems, which open the doors to creative pricing and all kinds of promotional opportunities with databases and tracking abilities. Traditional token promotions are still popular too. Whether such plans are in the works for you or not, the basic idea is there: make customers feel special, make them feel that they are getting a bargain, and give them a reason to return.

Have you noticed the slogan on Blockbuster's new release pamphlet? It says, "Go home happy. Stay home happy." For our industry it could be, "Come here to be happy. Come back for more." ▲

Bonnie Theard
Managing Editor

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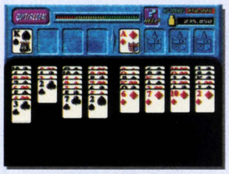

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Long before Robin Williams popularized the phrase Carpe Diem in the movie Dead Poet's Society, I toiled during college through the intricate language of the Metaphysical school of Renaissance poets, striving to glean wisdom from these post-stoics who were more than a little skeptical of the concept of delayed gratification.

The phrase came back to me several times this month while working on stories of success. In each case, small, virtually unknown companies have been able to take advantage of opportunities in large part because they were able to perceive a market shift and react quickly.

The first glimpse of this phenomenon came to me while listening to John Fowler of LBE Systems describe his conversion to the Arcade PC concept. He and partner Dave Foley had been looking at some form of networked game play for the retail industry when they tapped into Intel's Open Arcade Architecture initiative.

At that point, they asked the pivotal question: "Why waste time when there is this niche in the arcade market?" And they didn't, quickly shifting focus and developing a system for deploying and networking arcade games on a PC platform, a task larger entities such as AMOA's National Amusement Network Inc. have been working on for several years.

The second moment of insight came while interviewing Amir Rubin, CEO of sports simulation game manufacturer Interactive Light, who described his company's similar, if somewhat more dramatic, conversion to the idea of utilizing PC technology at a time when it was still only a rhetorical question for many in the coin-op industry.

Rubin's company had only recently introduced its game *Home Run Derby*, which had been developed around proprietary 3D sensing technology and the Sony PlayStation board. Having produced close to 100 games, Interactive Light was waiting on a more robust Sony system designed for the arcade when they learned it would be delayed for half a year or more.

This would spell sure disaster for the launch of *Home Run Derby*, delaying its deployment on location until after the baseball season thus diminishing its earning potential. However, fate provided the answer in the form of PC evangelists Ross Smith and Kristin Montgomery, who approached Interactive Light with new technology from their company 3Dfx Interactive, a PC graphics accelerator chip manufacturer.

Steve White

Special Projects Editor

After convincing software engineers from Interactive Light's subsidiary firm Immersia, the decision was made: forego using the Sony board and embark on a mad dash to transfer the game software to the PC. Members of the software team from Immersia, which is based in Israel, literally moved into 3Dfx's office in California and completed the conversion in a month, helping the former company troubleshoot problems with its initial product offering in the process.

"I was skeptical we would be able to move to the PC that quickly, but one beautiful thing about the PC is you can release a product and then update," Rubin told me. "We shipped the product and then later shipped locations more upgrades and customized logos."

Again, the ability to change direction in mid-stream allowed a small company to take advantage of an opportunity that a larger company might have missed. The unfortunate irony is that many companies find their stride as an innovator only to grow into their success and become the antithesis of their original conceit, an irony that would not be lost on poets the likes of John Donne, George Herbert, and Andrew Marvell.

The good news: exceptions to that rule abound, often overshadowing the scions of industry in the form of maverick air carriers like Southwest Airlines and politically and environmentally conscious food manufacturers such as Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream.

The greatest poet of all, William Shakespeare, said it best when he wrote: "In me thou seest the glowing of such fire, That on the ashes of his youth doth lie, As the death-bed whereon it must expire, consum'd with that, which it was nourished by. This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong, To love that well, which thou must leave ere long." ▲

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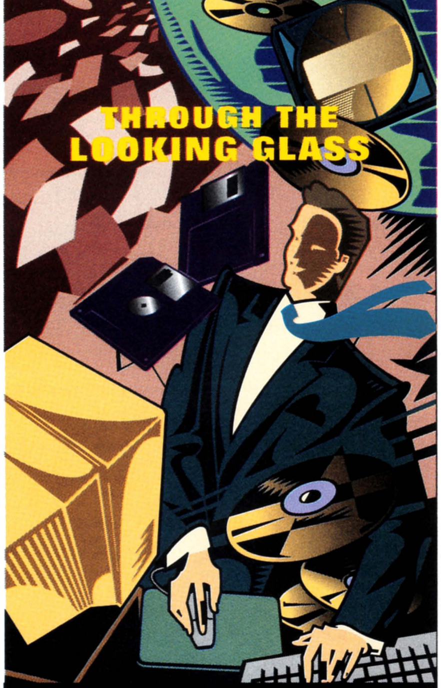


STEVE WHITE

Having climbed the mountain of technology, Open Arcade proponents now face the valley of arcade operations. Their next challenge is to provide a continuous stream of content for a burgeoning hardware base.

GAME DEVELOPER'S CONFERENCE

showcases Arcade PC products

Last year's Computer Game Developer's Conference debuted the launch of Intel's Open Arcade Architecture initiative, with the computer chip maker setting its sites on the coin-op industry as a theater of release for its high-end Pentium II processor. This year's newly renamed Game Developer's Conference in Long Beach, Calif., saw many of the same players return, this time with a bird in hand in the form of arcade games ready for the market.

Companies like Brainco, LBE Systems, and Opus Entertainment were on the Expo floor showing off the fruits of their year-long labors to potential content providers, while hardware solution provider Quantum3D and AMOA's National Amusement Network Inc. were hosting sessions explaining the opportunities available in the coin-op industry for independent game developers.

Ross Smith of Quantum3D told a group of developers during one seminar session that he expected to see close to 50,000 units in the field over the course of the next year including sales from partner companies LBE Systems and Opus. While that number pales by comparison to units sold in the consumer market, many developers appeared convinced that the exposure in coin-op could help defer some research and development costs and provide a much-needed boost in subsequent consumer sales.

"We are encouraging the development of games for our platform and explaining our market to everyone here," said John Klayh of Canadian-based TV Phone, AMOA's partner in the NANI networking project. "This show, which is like a mobile university, is what the AMOA show will hopefully become. We have already had really good interest from lots of game development teams."

Quantum3D's Expo booth played host to Brainco's Trip 2 single-player motion simulator as well as several titles from Opus and arcade versions of LBE Systems' *Quake Tournament Edition.* John Fowler of LBE Systems, which released its arcade game last month, said his company is still setting up distribution and pursuing some direct mail marketing opportunities.

"We have been waiting for two years for a standard that is broad based like NANI's."

LBE Systems has also struck a deal with Arcade PC publisher Opus, which will handle distribution of *Quake* in Europe. "We are friendly competitors but we're doing a lot of talking," said Opus' business development director Bob DeKett, who said the company plans to release 12 titles this year including flying, driving, and first-person action genres. Opus also announced distribution agreements with Deith Distributing in Canada and Betson Enterprises in the United States.

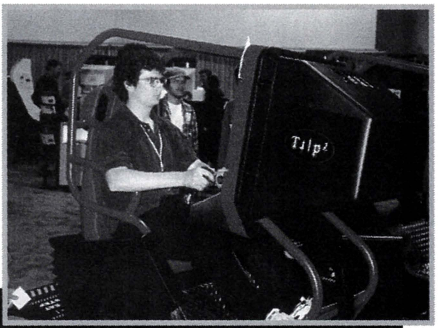
Brainco's Rich Moore said interest in the Trip 2 motion platform had been more favorable than expected with as many as seven consumer publishers pledging content. The company recently shipped 10 of its units to Europe. "We've had publishers come to us about providing content," Moore said. "We thought we would have to go out and find them."

However, caution appears to be the prevalent response from many in the coin-op industry who are concerned about the viability of the PC from both a technical and business standpoint, questioning whether it will hold up in an out-of-home environment and whether the Open Arcade platform will be open at all points of distribution from the manufacturer down to the location level.

Not surprisingly, advancements in PC technology have also prompted a second look from many coin-op companies over the past year or more, and companies like Atari, Midway, and Sega saw their games being exhibited by 3Dfx Interactive and Real 3D as powerful examples of current graphics technology.

NANI's John Klayh (r) with Interactive I/O's Francis DiGiorgio and NANI's lovely trade show hostess.

Brainco exhibited its Trip 2 simulator in both the NANI and Quantum 3D exhibits.



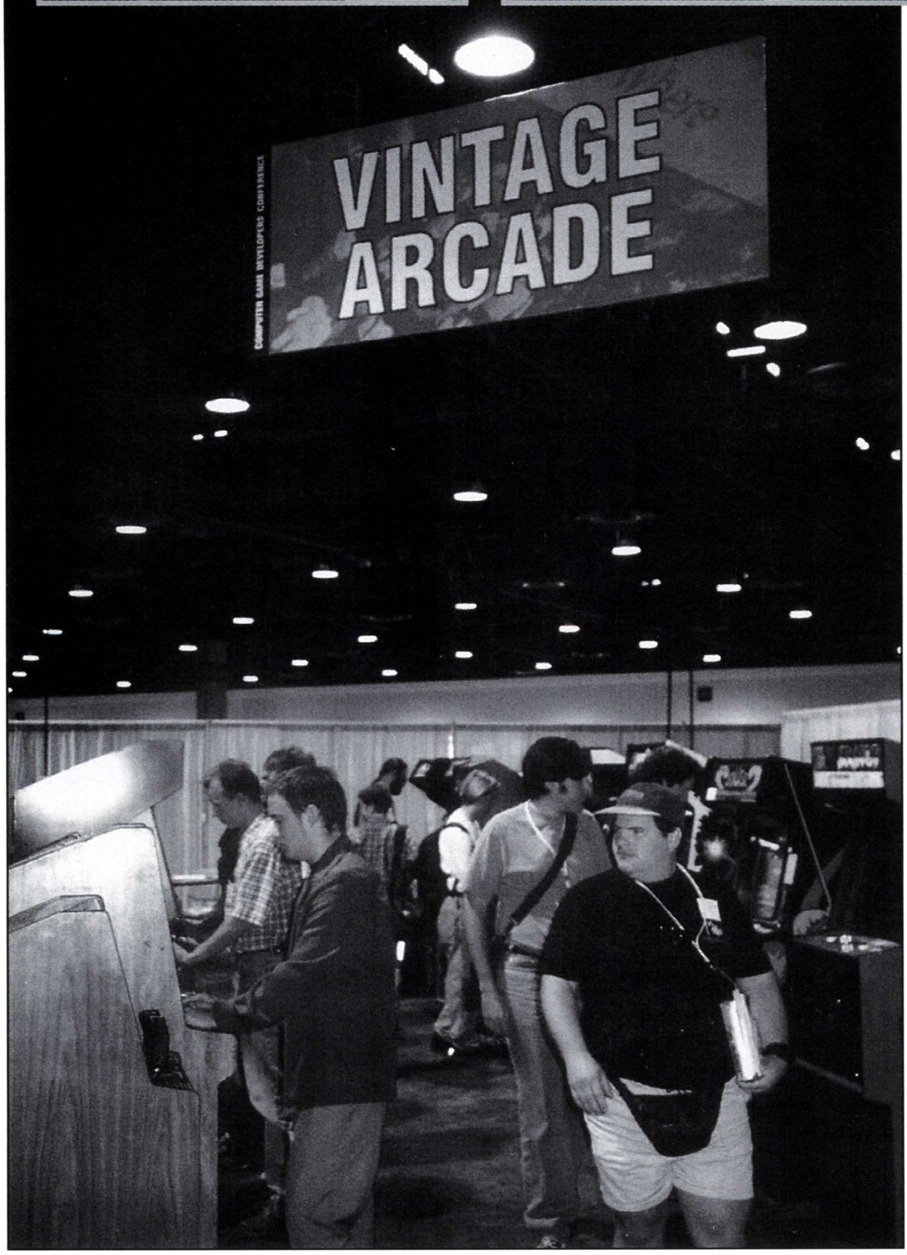
Bob DeKett of Opus Entertainment has a little fun with Quantum 3D's Sarah Sprinkles.

Atari's Mark Pierce also told a gathering of developers about his company's experiment using the game *San Francisco Rush the Rock* and networking technology developed by parent company Midway called the Wavenet. The company has linked games in remote locations using high-speed T1 connections and raised the game earnings in the process. Plans for the future could include game updates downloaded over the Internet and tournament play online.

A COIN-OP PERSPECTIVE

While the prospect of developing games on a universal PC platform opens up doors for many independent developers and raises the possibility of wider content availability, at least one coin-op veteran was on hand to cool the exuberance of Arcade PC proponents with a dose of hard-won experience in the trenches.

"It's not easy to make a game that earns $400 a week for 20 weeks," Elaine Ditton of Incredible Technologies told developers during a session entitled "Coin-Op Games: What's In It



The Vintage Arcade area was a big hit with game developers.

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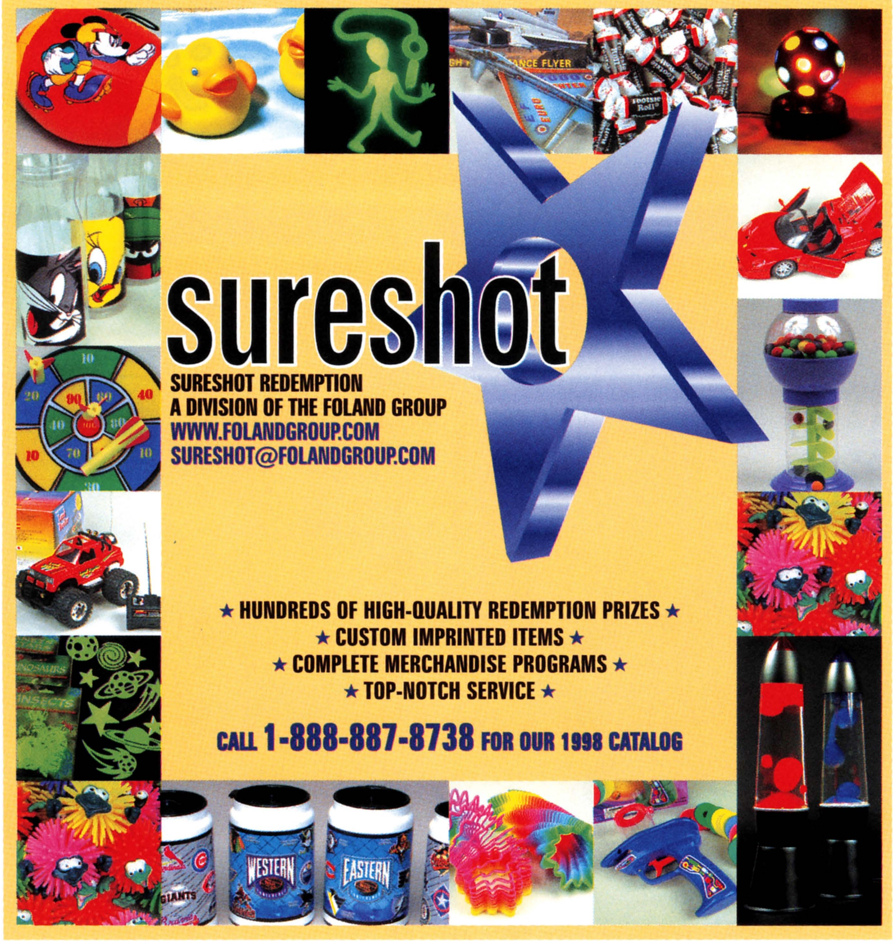
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For You?" "It's a hit driven business and it's a lot easier to find a market than to make a market."

Ditton said her company, Incredible Technologies, spent part of the last year trying to developing an Open Arcade game based on Inteplay's Virtual Pool, but found less than adequate support in the current marketplace.

"There is real hope for the Public PC and lot of good ideas surrounding the concept," she said. "We decided to try it and started by contacting all the people who said they would support this. The problem is they weren't ready to help deal with the problems we were having."

Those problems included standard PC hardware not rugged enough for out-of-home environments, difficulties with Windows 95, quickly evolving PC technology that inevitably dates the game software, and incompatibility with the current business model which is used to dealing with embedded hardware systems. Ditton said Incredible Technologies ultimately found it more cost effective to design a proprietary hardware board for the pool game that utilizes a number of off-the-shelf PC components.

"If these problems were addressed and there were 20,000 machines out there we would develop for the platform," added Ditton. "Right now, it doesn't exist. If you wanted to, you as developers could create an arcade game for coin-op and test it yourself. By the time you are done, maybe the Public PC will have caught up. If not, it's a great prototype."

While Incredible Technologies has found success through networking its sports titles such as *Peter Jacobsen's Golden Tee 3D Golf,* Ditton said she wasn't sure if it was economically feasible to install high-speed connections and pursue the type of head-to-head competition Atari is currently exploring. However, Incredible Technologies is currently exploring advertising options for its games.

Another coin-op veteran attending the Game Developer's Conference to share his experience and stay abreast of emerging technology was *Play Meter* contributing writer Michael Getlan

Give Your Arcade "The Edge" In Fun

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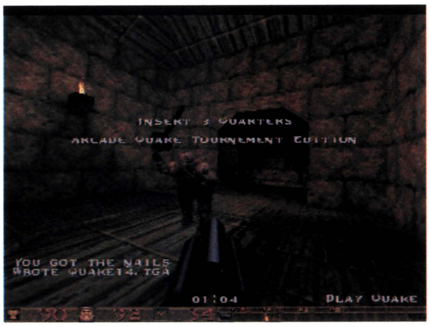

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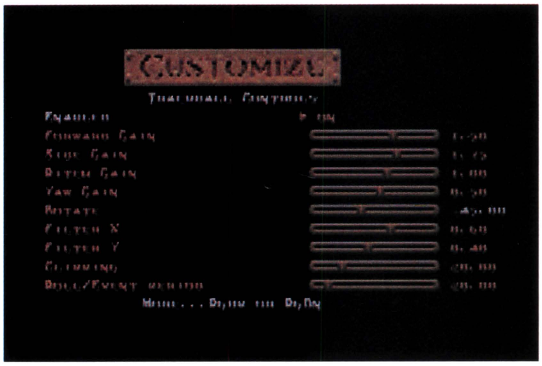

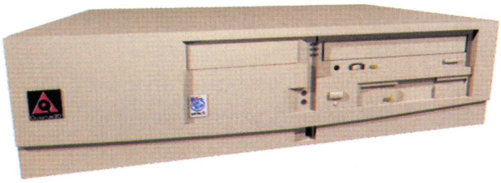

Quantum 3D Quicksilver 2

LBE Systems' **SparkyNET OS™** built into Quake ® -A.T.E. includes an interactive operator interface, allowing easy updating of software, game and control adjustments and reporting of collections. Additionally, it supports multiple coin door options including tokens, card readers and bill acceptors. **SparkyNET OS™** serverless death match environment allows you to save money by supporting up to 16 linked arcade units. Adding a **SparkyNET OS™** host server will allow you to link up to 64 units.

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of Amusement Consultants, who made his way around the show floor in typical fashion, critiquing products with a keen eye for top-notch game play and revenue earning potential.

"The show was exciting and interesting," Getlan said, "but many of these companies don't understand our business. You've got to have easy access to these systems from a player's point of view and many of these games don't. People need to be able to play a game while their girlfriend is making a phone call. It takes longer than that to read the instructions on some of these new games. There are no arcade game players involved in this."

A TURNKEY SOLUTION

One company attempting to provide a one-stop shopping solution for developers interested in the arcade market was Quantum 3D, which also introduced high- and low-end hardware products aimed at the home and entertainment simulation markets respectively.

These two contrasting products include a graphics hardware package that will be installed in home computers and sold as part of a bundle that will feature games for the top consumer publishers and the Heavy Metal Max, which will attempt to compete with Silicon Graphics hardware in the visual simulation marketplace.

"We now have products that stretch from the retail market all the way up to the location-based entertainment market and it's the same foundational technology," said Quantum 3D vice president of marketing Rick Bess.

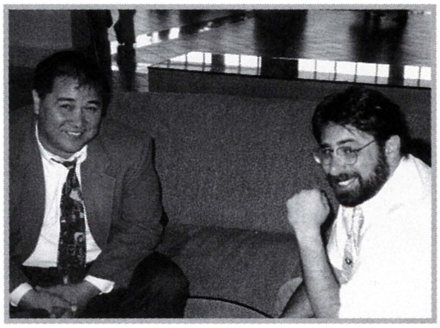
Bess added that since ASI in March, the company has received orders into the thousands for its Heavy Metal and Quicksilver arcade deployment systems, essentially computer systems that will be housed inside arcade cabinets. The company currently supplies Opus Entertainment and LBE Systems, and has recently landed two more as-yet-unannounced independent PC arcade publishers.

Quantum 3D's vice president of sales Ross Smith told an audience of developers the coin-op market could provide their game with a big screen venue, low-cost and high-impact marketing, incremental revenues and profits, and minimal additional effort to craft a coin-op experience out of the consumer game development process. "We are focused on minimizing the effort of taking PC games to the coin-op market," he said.

> *"People need to be able to play a game while their girlfriend is making a phone call. It takes longer than that to read the instructions on some of these new games."*

As an example of how the process would work, Smith pointed to LBE Systems and the work it did turning id Software's Quake into an arcade game. (For more on that process, see "Scoring Success," pg.: 110)

"You need to have an action title but that doesn't necessarily mean games described as an action game for the home; they will not always work in the arcade," said LBE Systems' David Foley, noting that a minimal learning curve, accessible game play, instant rewards, and high-end graphics are necessary to draw in the arcade player.



Arcade operators in attendance: Frank Westall (l) of Slam Site and Michael Getlan of Amusement Consultants.

LBE Systems' John Fowler (l) with Quantum 3D's Rick Bess.

Foley said game developers must also implement graceful and rapid error recovery when the PC encounters problems, offer minimal game play choices (unlike consumer games), provide full accounting and game setting controls for operators, minimize the load time for games, and hide all networking functions.

"Build a prototype and test it, test it, test it," concluded Foley. "You need a really rugged PC because people are going to get pissed off and shake the cabinet. Cooling is also a huge issue."

Smith urged developers interested in developing arcade games to contact LBE Systems or Opus and to join Intel's Open Arcade Architecture Forum. "If you have expertise, we could sure use it because we are developing a standard for the next generation of arcade games," he said.

NANI'S PRESENCE

As one of the show sponsors, AMOA's NANI occupied a prominent space on the Expo floor, providing game developers their first full-fledged peek at the so-called Public PC, a PC-based game platform that will network coin-op locations and players across the country.

NANI literature advertised the potential to deploy as many as two million pay-for-play video screens reaching 88 million users, "all for simple PC games you can create in your spare time." The NANI project boasts a number of high profile sponsors including Compaq, IBM, and EDS, which will handle the network. The NANI platform is compliant with Intel's OAA and utilizes Microsoft's DirectX technology.

"NANI is nothing but software and modem," said Klayh in an effort to explain that the operator-sponsored network is nothing more than a way to provide low-cost content to operators who will also be able to take advantage of the PC to sell advertising on their game screens.

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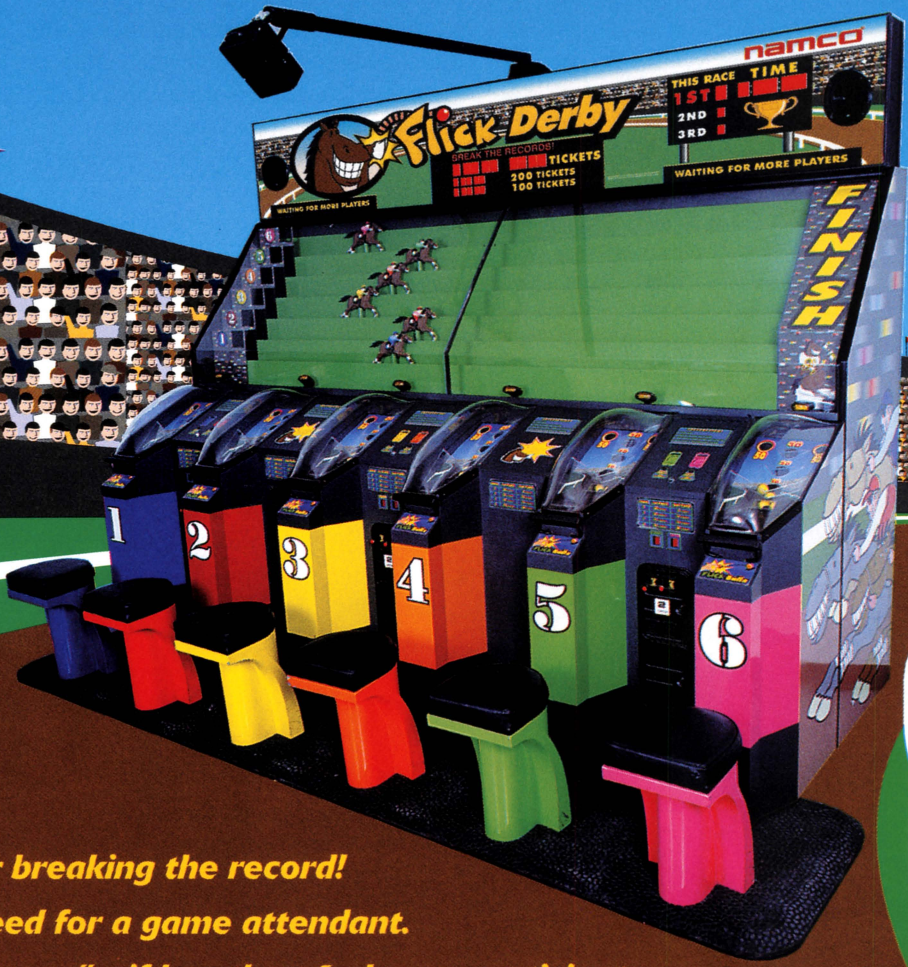
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tles will focus more on countertop-style games for route operations, Public PC hardware can be easily upgradeable and offer 3D performance with add-in cards from companies like NVIDIA and 3Dfx Interactive. Initial Open Arcade offerings from other companies have focused on game attractions that utilize cutting-edge PC graphics.

According to Klayh, a number of the titles featured on the unit will be run on a revenue share basis while others will be available for a fixed or per-play price. The system also offers operators the ability to run Internet-style banner ads and advertisements within some game play. All games are downloadable from the Internet or through a CD-ROM upgrade. NANI is hoping for 200 titles by the end of the year. The project is also pursuing other revenue streams for operators such as lottery sales and Internet banking transactions.

Both The Fun Co. and Lazer-Tron will supply cabinets, and production models will be equipped with a credit card reader, ticket dispenser, and printer door. Public PC units will utilize Compaq hardware featuring a Pentium II, 266 MHz processor.

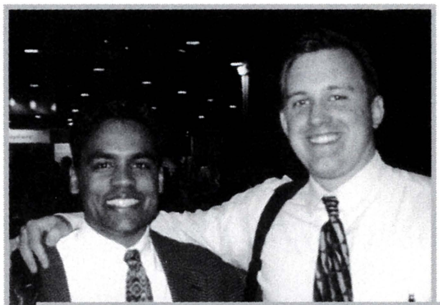
Also on display in the NANI booth were NANI compliant Compaq touch screens first shown at AMOA Expo '97 and a driving game configuration using Compaq PC, RCA large-screen monitor, and Interactive I/O's Virtual Vehicle driving simulator. The company is currently producing its own driving title that will be available on the NANI network.

"We had been waiting for content and when John approached us we couldn't pass it up," said Interactive I/O's Francis DiGiorgio. "We have been waiting for two years for a standard that is broad based like NANI's."

Mike Leonard of Coin-Op Specialists in Adrian, Mich.—AMOA's point man on the NANI project—said the association is taking a hard look at the way NANI will function. The network, he explained, has been through several technological incarnations since the project was first envisioned. "We are now trying to redefine the business model," Leonard explained.

Leonard's words could easily describe the task that most Open Arcade proponents now face, having climbed the mountain of technology only to face the valley of arcade operations. Their next challenge is to provide a continuous stream of content for this burgeoning hardware base that will turn a profit for their operator customers. ▲

Milind Bharvirkar of Virtual Technologies (l) and Bob Ferris of Ferris Productions.



***AB Europe* editor Alex Tanner checks out the NANI-compliant Compaq touch screen.**

NANI demonstrated a driving game configuration utilizing a driving simulator from Interactive I/O.

SPEED
SPEED

Exhibitors used several arcade games from Atari, Midway, and Sega as technology demonstrations.

Matt Barkin

> "THE YOUTH GETS TOGETHER HIS MATERIALS TO BUILD A BRIDGE TO THE MOON."
> — HENRY DAVID THOREAU

The industry mourns the loss of one of its own. Matt Barkin, an operator in California, died on April 24 at the cruelly early age of 35. He had made a name for himself in the coin machine industry when he became a full-fledged operator at only 13, placing pinball games at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif. He may be the only independent operator who rode his bicycle to make collections! But his humble industry beginnings weren't easy. He placed pinball machines in a number of locations that decided they were too noisy or too distracting before finding success at Stanford. Matt was so convinced he would be successful as an operator that he was quoted in the *Palo Alto Times* in an article on his accomplishments, "I plan on being a millionaire by the time I'm 21."

Matt's most recent claim to industry fame was his success with nickel arcades. He operated Nickel Play in Modesto, the last in a string of successes throughout his career. He entertained thoughts of law enforcement at one time, even taking courses in the administration of justice in college and serving as a volunteer police officer, but the industry lured him back. In 1983 he met Steve Apker of Outer Limits Amusement Services, who was opening a new arcade. Matt, who was just getting back into the industry again, operated the pinballs in Steve's arcade.

Matt Barkin (l) with his brother Paul

Steve and Matt remained good friends even after the arcade closed. Steve, who runs a street route now, described Matt as generous, helpful, and devoted to helping others. "Matt was generous to a fault. If he hired someone who didn't have a car, Matt made sure he got one. That's one thing anyone who knew him will tell you: he was always helping others," Steve said.

Matt's father, Alan, agreed that Matt was always helping someone. "The last time we had dinner with Matt, he brought a teenager who was having troubles at home and needed a place to stay. It was so typical of Matt to offer his help. He was a wonderful person and had a big heart."

But it wasn't just casual help Matt was willing to give to kids. As a recovering drug addict, he was determined to save others from that fate. He started a Just Say No to Drugs Club at his Keystone Arcade in 1992. A newspaper article featured the club, which offered members an hour of free play at the arcade for their pledge to stay drug free. "I believe I'm in the type of business where I can give back to kids," Matt said in the article in the *San Jose Mercury News*. "Most of my profits go back to them through upkeeping the center and offering them some positive alternatives to going to the streets."

It was clear that Matt also loved the industry he'd been a part of since his teens. He summed up his feelings in the 1992 article, "I want my arcade to have a clean and safe atmosphere where kids come to have fun."

Matt's life was not ordinary and neither was his death. He was on his way back from a trip to Oregon, accompanied as he always was by his beloved dog Earl. Matt stopped at a truck stop to let Earl out. When Matt stepped out, he fell and the truck rolled over him. He went to the hospital, had X-rays taken, and was released.

Matt and Earl continued their journey home, but soon Matt was just not feeling right. He pulled into a motel, called his father, and said he had double vision and felt faint. Although his dad and brother insisted on coming to get him, Matt wouldn't hear of it. His dad said Matt assured them he'd make it back on his own. Matt died sometime during the night. Earl's frantic barking brought the hotel manager to the room where he found Matt.

Marty Shumsky of Reno Game Sales, who knew Matt for many years, said the funeral was a haunting mixture of deep grief and a plethora of stories shared by those who knew him best. The most heart-wrenching recollections were of the little dog that never left Matt's side. Earl, named after one of Steve's former partners, went to work and made trips with Matt. Matt even did some TV commercials for Nickel Play featuring Earl playing pinballs! Steve said that Earl logged more miles than a truck driver! Jeff Miller, a friend of Matt's in Santa Barbara, has adopted Earl. Steve noted that there were about two dozen offers from friends and family to care for Earl. "Everyone who knew Matt knew Earl," he added.

Matt is survived by his parents, Corinne and Alan Barkin of Menlo Park; sister Janet Jacobi of Sunnyvale; and brother Paul Barkin of Santa Clara. We join them and Matt's many industry friends in saying a final farewell to someone his friends described as an honor to know. ▲

New Namco games Domínican

LEFT: Looking like they're posing for a tropical-themed postcard, (l-r): Fay and Mike Cooper (New Way Sales), Jim Niblock (Canadian Coin Machine), and Paul and Fran Janda (New Way Sales).
RIGHT: From left: *Play Meter's* Carol Lally, Canadian Coin's Jim Niblock, and Ralph's Automatic's Ann Winfield and Gene Peacosh. Talk about a view!

GENTLE TROPICAL BREEZES AND PERFECT WEATHER WERE THE BACKDROP FOR NAMCO'S SUMMER DISTRIBUTOR MEETING HELD IN THE PICTURESQUE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN EARLY MAY. ABOUT 120 GUESTS WERE TREATED TO AN ARRAY OF ACTIVITIES FROM SNORKELING ON CATALINA ISLAND AND GOLF AT THE BEST COURSES TO A SUNSET SEA CRUISE AND TO-DIE-FOR SHOPPING SPREES. NOT TO MENTION THE MAIN EVENT—INNOVATIVE NEW PRODUCT INTRODUCTIONS!

Regrettably, Namco chairman and CEO Masaya Nakamura was unable to attend the meeting but sent a heartfelt message delivered by executive vice president/COO Kenji Hisatsune, assuring the group that he was there with them in spirit: "I am sorry I cannot be there to greet you in the Dominican Republic. Business in Tokyo has kept me from coming. I will see you at the fall distributor meeting."

Frank Cosentino, vice president of sales and marketing, told the group of distributors, "Regarding the future, I want to assure you that Namco has a commitment to product, a commitment to innovation, and a commitment to its distributors."

The highlight, and the proof of Cosentino's words, was the introduction of four innovative new products: *Panic Park, Family Bowl, Hammer Champ*, and *Soul Calibur*. Distributors were impressed with the variety of themes. Herman Fox of Cleveland Coin echoed sentiments heard throughout the meeting, "This is very avant-garde equipment. There is room for all these games in the market; they all look good. When different games hit, they really hit. The innovation grabs people's imaginations. If you're looking for equipment for the big game rooms, Namco has it."

PANIC PARK

This game is best described as a maze challenge, featuring 18 different games on a video screen, with a twist. Players use a unique, innovative sliding joystick with a 180-degree arc to control their characters. The fun part is that while players are controlling their characters through an array of challenging tasks, they can also sabotage their opponent's character using the same joystick!

Examples of games to choose from are crossing a wooden bridge, driving a car, and picking up gold coins. In the first adventure the character jumps and lands on a bridge's wooden slats. When he lands on one it splinters and falls away and the character bounces back up and must land on another slat trying to avoid landing where there is no longer a slat. As the player continues, the choices of where to land get slimmer thus making the game even more exciting.

In the second example, players must drive a car through a maze while dodging objects such as cactus plants. If the

introduced in the Republic

***Play Meter's* Carol Lally joins the Namco contingent before heading onto the dance floor.**

Namco's Kenji Hisatsune (l) chats with Namco's Ann and Kevin Hayes and their three beach-loving children.

Cleveland Coin's Herman Fox takes his shot on *Hammer Champ*.

character hits a cactus the player will hear a yelp as the character moves on. In the third example, players must maneuver their characters through various mazes trying to find and pick up gold coins while avoiding hidden dangers.

Panic Park is a colorful simultaneous two-player game that's fun to play. Namco calls it "high-end performance at an affordable price." Cosentino added, "*Panic Park* epitomizes Namco's attempt at innovation." Barry Schraier of Warehouse of Vending and Games expressed his opinion about *Panic Park*: "This is one of the most unique games I've ever seen. It mixes physical ability with challenging game play." The game comes in two cabinet configurations: 27-inch monitor and 50-inch monitor.

FAMILY BOWL

It's party time for up to four players on this unique bowling game machine that is more than meets the eye. It has a configuration similar to the familiar Skee-Ball game and the player rolls a real ball toward the pins, but here's where the innovation kicks in. As the ball rolls into the back of the machine, the action is transferred to a video screen. The player follows the path his ball is taking on the screen.

There are these special features: The Sliding Lane—the lane slides right and left in the next frame if a ball goes in the gutter. Uncle Afro's Aid—when the first throw results in one pin left or a split, Uncle Afro appears and fans the pins or stamps his feet on the lane. The Red Pin—the red pin appears at random and any player who scores a strike with the red pin can use the secret "Uncle Afro on Skate Board" command. Challenge the Strike—when a player scores perfect in a game, he can continue throwing as long as he can score strikes.

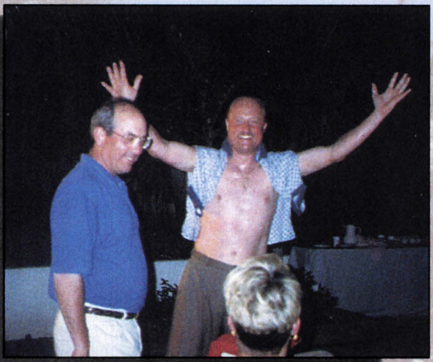
In addition, the game has secret features: Curve Ball—tap the triangle but-

From left: *Play Meter's* Carol Lally, Mexel's Jacob Shermaria, and Namco's Lucinda Bender.

The meeting drew a sizable European gathering.

Ah, another great view! Enjoying it are Namco's Kevin Hayes (l) and Kathy and Herman Fox of Cleveland Coin.

AMA Distributing's Bob and Jerri Nims and Central Distributing's Mark Singer (r) watch the action on *Family Bowl* along with Namco's Kevin Hayes' two young sons.



Happy Birthday, Tom! Namco's Tom Siemieniec celebrates his birthday poolside.

Mike Cooper (r) of New Way Sales watches as Marc Haim of R.H. Belam beats the competition on Soul Calibur.

Golf was one of the most popular activities enjoyed here by, (l-r): Brady Distributing's Chris Brady, Birmingham Vending's Steven Toronto, Moss Distributing's Craig Cohoon, and Namco's Tom Siemieniec.

These distributors really enjoyed their game of *Panic Park*!

From left: Barry and Alyssa Schraier (Warehouse of Vending & Games), Nick and Kerrasa Sarioglou (State Sales), Mike Cooper (New Way Sales), Kathy and Herman Fox (Cleveland Coin), Gary Gouse (Birmingham Vending), and Caroline and Rubin Piha (Greater Southern).

ton while a ball is on the lane to make the ball curve. Hyper Ball—touch the O button once while a ball is on the lane to power the ball up. When the hyper ball hits the number one pin, it automatically becomes a strike. Gutter Bird—push the O button when a ball goes into a gutter to call an eagle. The bird rescues the ball and a player can try his throw again. Uncle Afro on Skate Board—when a player scores a strike with the red pin and pushes the O button before the next throw, a ball changes into Uncle Afro on a skate board.

"It's great for kids. But even grown-ups will be attracted to it. They'll enjoy playing because there is skill involved," explained Bob Nims of AMA Distributors.

HAMMER CHAMP

This game brings to mind Olivia Newton-John singing, "Let's get physical." That's just the right description for what Namco calls "a new generation of wac-'em games." The player grabs an attached hammer but instead of pounding objects as they pop up, he hammers buttons on the control panel that correspond to images on a video screen. "Unlimited expression on screen of computer graphics blows away the tiring simplicity of present wac-'em games!!" touts Namco's product brochure. There are three stages in one game; players must clear each one within 60 seconds. For instance, heads might turn around on the video screen. With the hammer the player must hit the button that corresponds to the turning head on the screen. Each stage features a different theme: original wac-'em-all, intelligence, physical strength, and super barrage.

SOUL CALIBUR

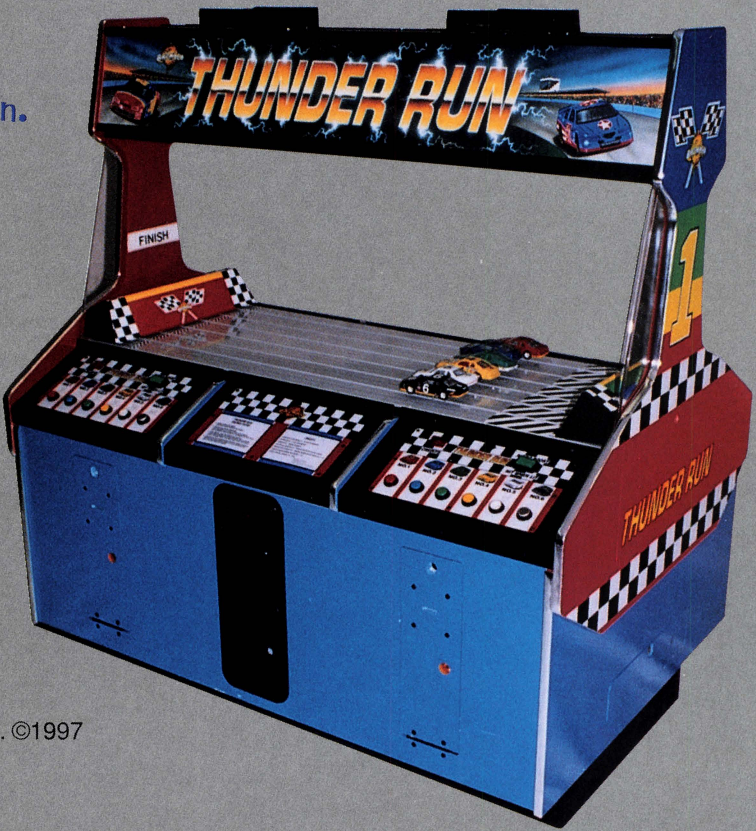
This system 12 board offers stunning graphics, and Namco says it's the fastest playing game the company has ever introduced. The game entices the player with this challenge, "Whether you live or die is up to you!" This fighting themed video game, available in kit form, features characters with universal appeal and a beat-me-if-you-can attitude. There are timed release characters, a number of unique stages, and outstanding features. The "soul charge" allows players to power up their characters and then create their own combo and string moves. "I really like this game," said Marc Haim of R.H. Belam. "It's similar to *Soul Edge* with wonderful controls. It's another good Namco fighting game." ▲

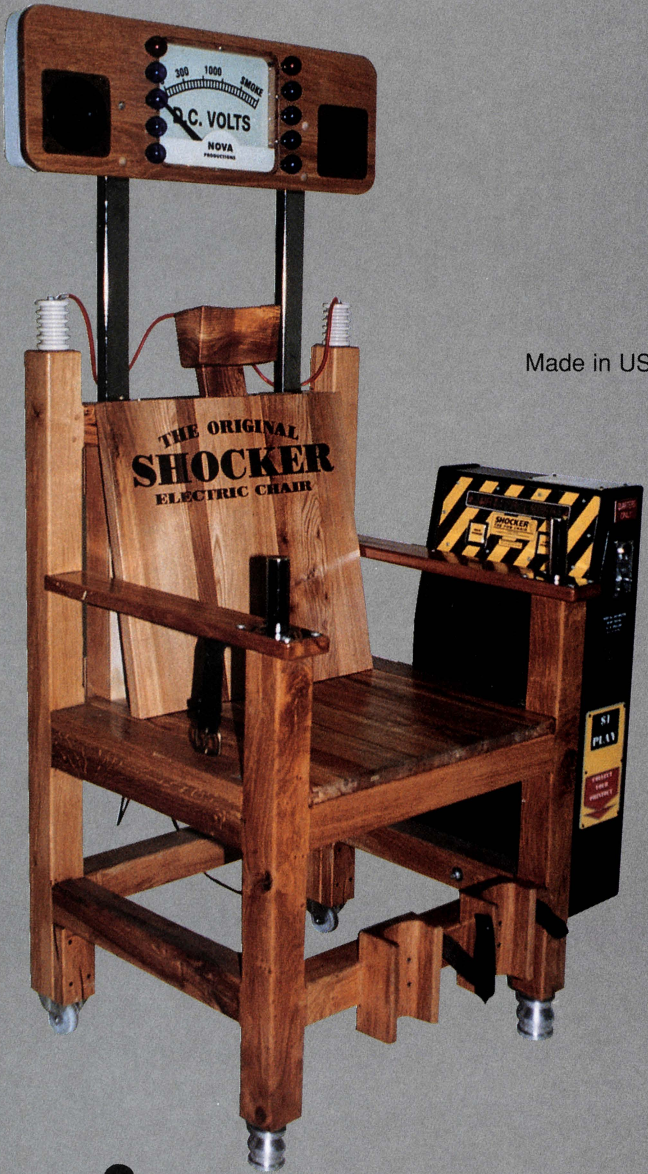
INTRODUCING

THUNDER RUN

Boost earnings with Thunder Run.
1-4 player challenge.

Dimensions:
W=63" H=69" DP=43"
WT=520 lbs.


THUNDER RUN
FINISH
THUNDER RUN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$1 PLAY

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Dimensions:
W=41" H=80" DP=31"
WT=400 lbs.

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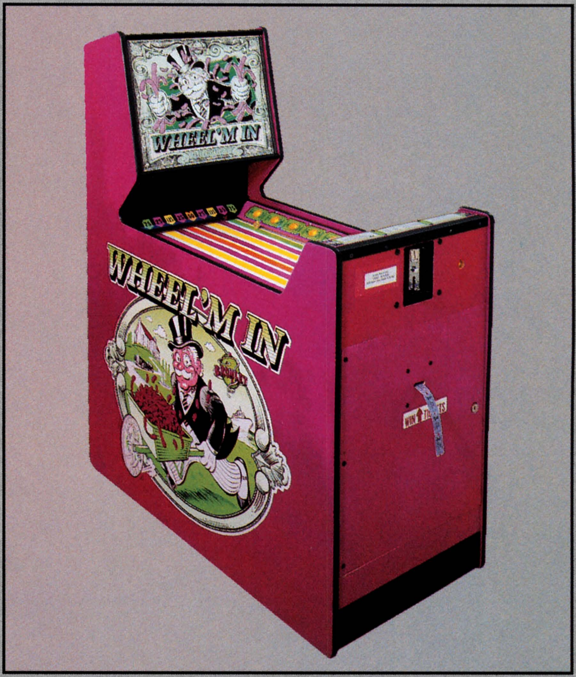
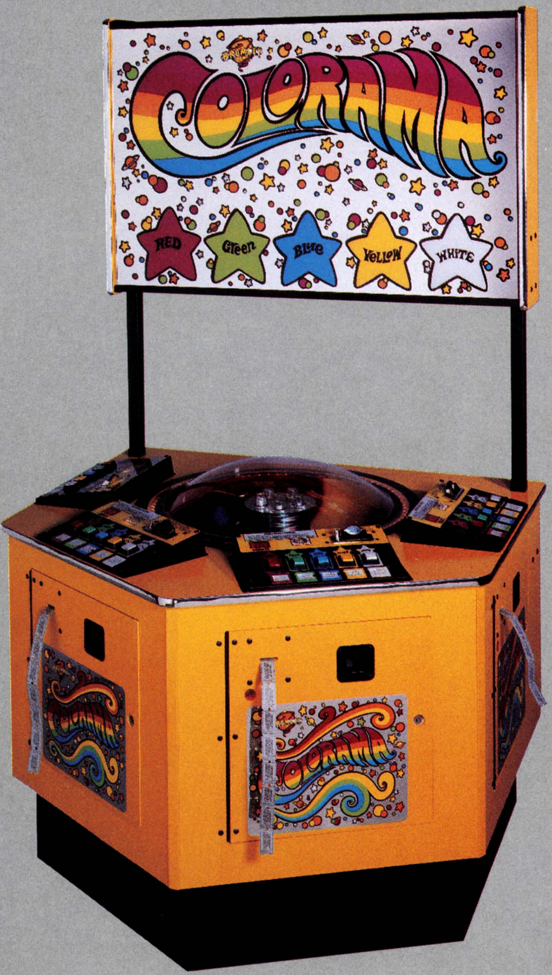

WHEEL'M IN
WHEEL'M IN

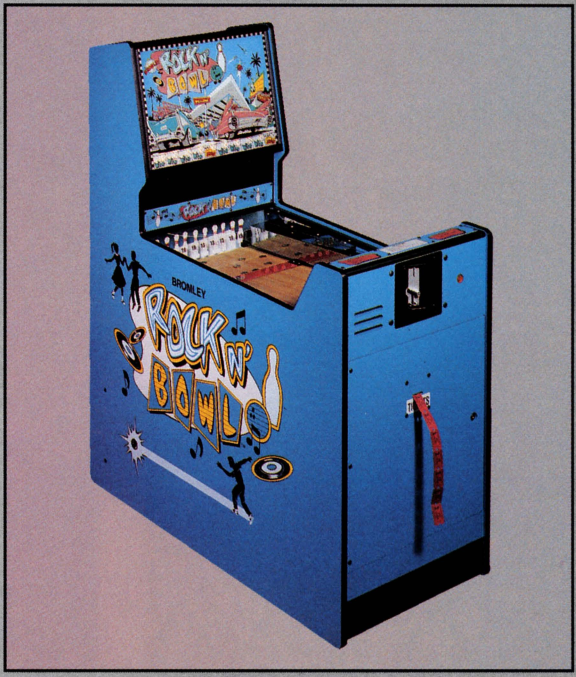
Dimensions:
W=22 1/8"
H=57 1/4"
L=47"
WT= 284 LB

Wheel 'm In


COLORAMA
RED
Green
Blue
Yellow
WHITE

Dimensions:
W=48"
H=77/89" MAX
L=44"
WT= 420 LB

Colorama


ROCK N' BOWL
BROMLEY
ROCK N' BOWL

Dimension
W=22 1/4"
H=57 1/4"
L=45 1/4"
WT= 240 L

Rock 'n Bowl

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Above: Billiards is a major ingredient at all Dave & Buster's stores.

Below: Dave & Buster's upscale locations feature wide walkways, good signage, and a host of activities.

THE MIDWAY BAR
MIDWAY DINING
GALAXIAN THEATER

Dave & Buster's opens in Michigan

Dave & Buster's recently launched its newest location in the northern Detroit suburb of Utica, Mich., and broke all previous revenue records.

Commented D & B co-founder Dave Corriveau: "Our previous high was held by our North Bethesda, Md., store which opened just over a year ago in a mall during the busiest shopping period of the year. We thought that record would stand for a long time, but this was probably the most enthusiastic crowd we've ever seen."

Added co-founder Buster Corley, "Not only was it a record week for sales, but it was without a doubt the smoothest, most well-managed opening we've ever done. This is a direct testament to what I've been saying for a while now—that our management and opening teams just keep getting better. I'm extremely proud of our team and our entire Utica staff."

Dave & Buster's currently operates 13 upscale restaurant and entertainment locations across the United States, with four more planned for 1998. Seven locations are slated for the United Kingdom, the first in Birmingham and the second in Bristol.

Hard Times Cafe picks Wurlitzer

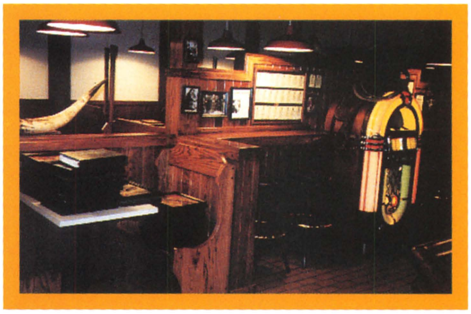
A new restaurant chain specializing in casual food and Cincinnati-style, Depression-era chili has chosen Wurlitzer Jukebox Co.'s *One More Time* model to provide music for its customers.

An agreement was reached between Wurlitzer and American Chili Management, franchiser of the new Hard Times Cafe. There are eight locations in operation at the present time; the ninth opened last month. The company is planning to open 100 restaurants over the next three years; most will be franchised, with about 10 percent to 15 percent company-owned.

Stated Richard Garland, vice president of operations for American Chili Management, "We have experimented with a couple of different jukeboxes, and the Wurlitzer *One More Time* had the look and the features we wanted. Our customers absolutely love the Wurlitzer. It fits perfectly with the theme of our restaurants."

Wurlitzer's Dave Peckels commented, "Wurlitzer is very pleased that Hard Times has decided on our jukebox. I must say that their taste in jukeboxes is equal to their taste in chili. It's the best I've ever had."

Hard Times Cafe was founded to carry on the local chili parlor tradition that dates back to desperate times in the 1930s when it was said that chili saved more lives than the Red Cross. Chili parlors offered an inexpensive and nourishing meal for millions of Americans.



Wurlitzer's *One More Time* provides atmosphere and music for the Hard Times Cafe chain.

Mondial Distributing sells offices to State Sales

Mondial Distributing has sold its two remaining offices in Bensalem, Pa., and Springfield, N.J., to State Sales & Service Corp. headquartered in Baltimore, Md. Earlier this year the company sold its offices in Norwood, Ma., and Rochester, N.Y., to Betson Coin-Op Distributing. The sale was scheduled to close May 15.

"State Sales' offer was an opportunity we felt compelled to take," Mondial's Bruce Sarkisian told *Play Meter.* "Mondial International will continue to export and we still own a share of Monduce." Monduce markets remote control attractions and merchandise machines and offers services that include coin-op amusement operations and management for high-traffic facilities including malls and parks.

Industry watchers have noted a number of factors contributing to consolidation at the distribution level, most notably the lack of product enjoying high-volume sales with operators across the country.

State Sales will reportedly maintain both the Springfield and Bensalem facilities in their current locations. Chris Vecchione, Mondial's general manager in Bensalem, will remain as will Jack Guarnieri, general manager in Springfield.

"We are confident that Steve Koningsberg and his team will do an excellent job in upholding the standard of courteous and efficient service to the operating community maintained by Mondial," Mondial Distributing president Richard Sarkisian said in a statement released to the trade press.

GameWorks Studio opens in California

GameWorks Studio, developed to complement the GameWorks flagship entertainment destinations, opened May 22 at the Puente Hills mall in the City of Industry, 40 miles southwest of Los Angeles, Calif.

GameWorks Studio is a smaller, more intimate venue specifically geared to a family audience and ideally suited for shopping mall locations. The facility was inspired by Steven Spielberg and Sound Stage 35 on the Universal Studios back lot.

As part of the grand opening festivities, GameWorks Studio hosted a Rapid River Challenge inviting teams of two to go head-to-head against another duo to ride the rapids on the new, thrilling white water fantasy simulation game. Winners walked away with a variety of prizes including VIP back lot passes to Universal Studios.

GameWorks Studio features large picture windows through which mallgoers can look into a miniature sound stage. The facility offers visitors a back lot pass to fresh adventures in a Hollywood movie-set-like environment.

Featured games include all the top sports, racing, fighting, virtual reality, motion simulation, skill, and redemption games arranged in themed environments or neighborhoods. These include The Hot Zone, high-tech industrial; The Living Room, surreal '70s lounge kitsch; The Half Court, urban-inspired asphalt; The Surf Shack, nostalgic '60s beach; The Garage, grunge-inspired; and The Redemption Area, carnival fun.

In addition, The Back Lot Cafe offers hot dogs and sodas, The Chill Zone is a time-out spot, and The Parent Corner is for parents to take a break and watch their kids play.

Said Michael Montgomery, president and CEO of Sega GameWorks, "GameWorks Studio is a natural extension of our entertainment business. As we continue to open additional GameWorks destinations in major markets, the new concept allows us to extend our reach to entertainment districts, urban retail sites, and suburban area malls, making our unique game and entertainment environments more accessible to more people in more locations." Additional GameWorks Studio locations will be announced throughout the year.

Midway introduces new *Touchmaster* cabinet

Midway Games recently introduced a new, upright cabinet design for its popular *Touchmaster* touch screen video game that features a 19-inch screen. The initial cabinets were shipping with the new *Touchmaster 4000* software, which features new games including classics like Breakout and Centipede and innovative new titles such as Flight Deck and Go Wild.

"Every aspect of the upright has been engineered to maximize the player's comfort and enjoyment," said product manager Marty Glazman. "The games can be played comfortably sitting or standing. The monitor is bigger and angled correctly for game play.

"The touch screen itself has a very quick response which makes game play much more exciting. The speaker has been positioned on top of the game so players can enjoy the music and sound that are part of the games. We've addressed every design aspect and delivered a product that will continue *Touchmaster*'s reputation."

Midway has increased the size of the *Touchmaster* design team as well, resulting in the new offering of game titles, and the upright cabinet has been designed to make future software upgrades simple. The *Touchmaster* upright is UL approved and comes with a one-year, full-product warranty.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Midway Games, (773)961-1000; fax (773)961-1060; Web site (http://www.midway.com).

TOUCH MASTER
CATEGORIES
CARDS
ACTION
NEW
WORDS
SKILL
EROTIC
INSERT COIN
MIDWAY
M
TOUCH MASTER

Midway Games recently introduced a new, upright cabinet design for its *Touchmaster* touch screen video game.

"Hey, you're a **real** gem"
SAPPHIRE
Sapphire

While the line may be typical, the jukebox is anything but … With the combination of NSM's superior CD technology, a fast-moving sixteen-jacket title display, and an attractive cabinet design, the Sapphire is a real gem for music operators.

To discover more about the NSM Sapphire, please contact your local distributor.

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NSM Sapphire

LBE shipping *Quake A.T.E.*

Open Arcade Architecture
Games for the Next Generation
QUAKE
QUAKE

Quake A.T.E.

LBE Systems LLC has begun shipping the arcade version of id Software's popular game Quake. Known as *Quake-Arcade Tournament Edition* (A.T.E.), the game runs on the SparkyNET OS multiplayer arcade game network and features a unique new deathmatch level (The Edge) not available on the PC version.

According to Todd Hollenshead, CEO of id Software, "*Quake-A.T.E.* gives a large number of Quake players an opportunity to experience the excitement and thrill of playing multiplayer Quake in the arcades. The game is designed to operate on high-end Intel Pentium II PC systems to enhance the game experience and immerse the player into the Quake environment."

Added Intel's Albert Teng, director of coin-op market development, "*Quake-A.T.E.* is a great example of taking a popular PC home game and bringing it to the arcade. Quake arcade players will clearly enjoy the same incredible graphics and unsurpassed network game play they love on their home PC, even more on the Open Arcade Architecture version."

For more about LBE Systems and a close-up of *Quake A.T.E.* in action at the new Sega GameWorks in Grapevine, Texas, turn to page 110.

Bueschel's lasting contribution

Prolific writer and historian Dick Bueschel chronicled the early days of amusement machines in memorable books that can be found on many desks throughout the coin machine industry. The energetic and optimistic Bueschel was working on new volumes at the time of his death April 19 from a brain tumor. He was 72. (See "In Memory" on page 68).

Bueschel was well-known in industry circles. He was a guest speaker at the Century Club meeting at ASI '97 and was featured on the recent video, "Pleasure Machines: The History of Pinball." The Pinball Expo was one of his favorite events.

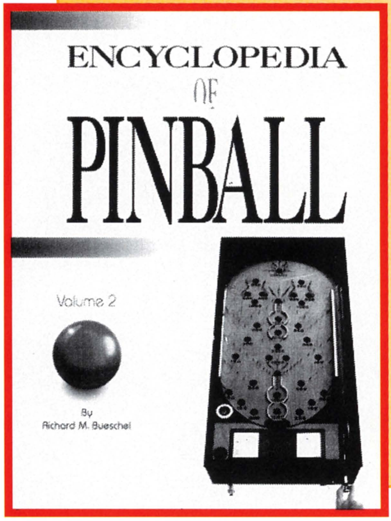
Following is a list of some of Bueschel's popular books that are still available:

☛ "Encyclopedia of Pinball: Vol. 1" (Whiffle to Rocket, 1930-1933); "Encyclopedia of Pinball: Vol. 2" (Contact to Bumper, 1934-1936) from Pinball Resource, (914)473-7114; fax (914)473-7116; e-mail (PBResource@idsi.net).

☛ "Lemons, Cherries and Bell-Fruit-Gum," an illustrated history of slot machines from Royal Bell/Coin Drop International, (303)431-9266; fax (303)431-6978; e-mail (rbltd@cris.com).

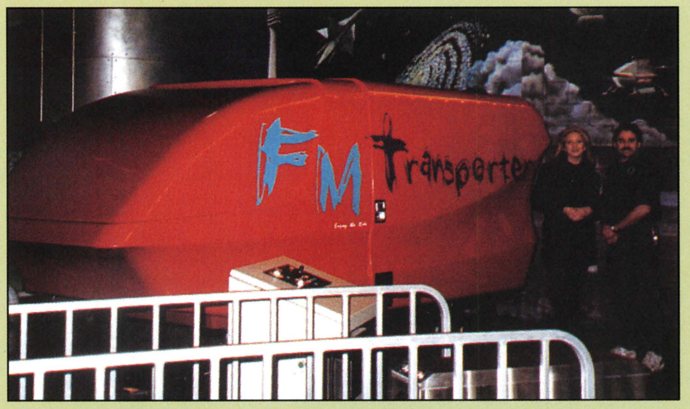
☛ "Collector's Guide to Vintage Coin Machines" and "Collector's Guide to Vintage Trade Stimulators and Counter Games" from Schiffer Publishing, (610)593-1777.

Another source for Bueschel's books is Ken Durham, Web site (http://www.gameroomantiques.com).


ENCYCLOPEDIA
OF
PINBALL
Volume 2
By
Richard M. Bueschel

One of Bueschel's best-selling books.

Funmania for the whole family



Doron Precision Systems recently installed its newest entertainment simulator, the Transport 6, at Funmania, a family entertainment center located in Old Bridge, N.J. Programs licensed for use at the facility include Astro Canyon Coaster, Kid Coaster, Slot Car Boogie, and Smash Factory. "The simulator has gone over very well with the kids and installation was very quick and simple," said Funmania general manager David Schwartz. For more on Funmania turn to our feature on debit card systems, page 89.

CLAIM JUMPER

Claim Jumper is our exciting new and innovative skill redemption game that is taking the industry by storm! Featuring 18 train cars for 18 progressive jackpots that up to 4 players compete for! It's a fast train ride to riches, so stake your claim now!
Size: 47" W x 47" D x 60" H, Wt. 385 lbs.

Claim Jumper
TICKETS

SLAM BINGO
GAME OVER
TICKETS

SLAM BINGO

Bingo for the 21st Century! Skill stop the lights to pick five to ten numbers on the bingo card. Win with a three, four or five in a row - hit the Super Bingo and win the ultimate ticket payout!
Size 35" W x 26" D x 77" H, Wt. 250 lbs.

BIG HAUL
TICKETS

BIG HAUL

The #1 Redemption Classic! Combines the skill of a rolldown with the feel of a pusher for unparalleled collections. Time your coin to land in one of eight trucks or hit the Dump Lever to score "The Big Haul".
Pictured left: Two-Player Version.
Pictured Right: Limited Edition Single
Also available in Truck Stop Version.
2-P Size: 51" W x 38" D x 38.5" H, Wt. 370 lbs.
1-P Size: 25.5" W x 38" D x 38.5" H, Wt. 185 lbs.

BIG HAUL
TICKETS

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A top earner! Inline is a skill stop game with the exciting features of a classic line game and a whole lot more! Try for a 3, 4 or 5 in line, or go for the "Super Diamonds" or even "Double Inline" for the ultimate 1000 ticket payout.
Size: 35" W x 26" D x 77" H, Wt. 250 lbs.

968
INLINE
GAME OVER
TICKETS

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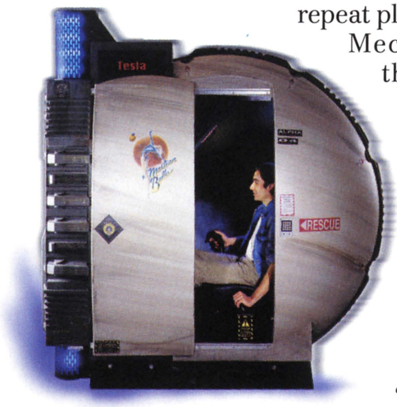
Virtual World to work with Pinnacle

As reported last month, Virtual World Entertainment has entered into a sales consulting agreement with Pinnacle Entertainment Group of St. Louis, Mo., to raise awareness of its interactive BattleTech attraction.



A player enters Virtual World's BattleTech cockpit and gets ready for action.

BattleTech features cockpits designed to ensure high repeat play value. Players pilot BattleMechs and strive to improve their combat skills against other pilots as they compete in 3D environments.

Pinnacle president George McAuliffe said the attributes of the BattleTech attraction make it a very appealing addition to many FECs.

According to Ted Keenan, Virtual World vice president of business development, "With their reputation for quality and sound business judgment, Pinnacle will help us meet our goals."

CACI and IAFEC offer demographic package

CACI Marketing Systems has formed a partnership with the International Association of Family Entertainment Centers to offer an IAFEC Site Location and Marketing Package. The package is designed to help answer questions like, "What is the best site for marketing my center–and how do I find it?;" "Who are my customers and where are they located?;" and "How do I find more customers?"

The special 14-page report and map package will help FEC owners/operators to better understand their current markets and any new markets they are considering. It features nearly 400 different demographic variables, along with details on retail spending and neighborhood lifestyles. It also includes current year updates and five-year forecasts about the market.

Carole Sjolander, executive director of IAFEC, said, "The most astute managers I know are buying demographic reports on an annual basis before doing any marketing planning. One FEC owner I know saw his revenue sliding but couldn't figure out why. He got a new demographic report and was surprised at how much his area had changed. Some think you only need to get this type of information one time. They need to rethink that."

The report is offered at a discount for IAFEC members. Call CACI Marketing Systems on its toll-free number (800/394-3690) and ask for Mary Kaneaster. She'll give you all the details on what they have to offer.

Fun Merchants announces Super 90 lease program

Crane manufacturer Fun Merchants recently announced its new Super 90 lease program for five of its best selling machines. The program affords operators looking to diversify or expand an existing crane route an opportunity to lease a merchandiser for three years with no money down.

In addition, the first lease payment is not due for the first 90 days allowing operators to build up their plush inventory. Products available for lease under this new program include:

Mega Crane Jumbo 1 Player-A newly designed jumbo crane that is Fun Merchants' flagship product featuring hot pink styling complete with scrolling lights accenting the entire cabinet and an arched lighted marquee.

Big Choice 1 Player-This workhorse unit comes in classic red with gold framing and a backlit Big Choice marquee.

Candyman 1 Player-The classic play-until-you-win unit is a favorite with kids.

Gift Box 1 Player-Featuring the proven magnetic Belgian mechanism, this crane works with any size gift box, expanding the variety of merchandise available for operators and customers.

Gift Box Jumbo 1 Player-Just say super size it to the above order and you have this unit, which can display nearly twice the merchandise of the original *Gift Box.* Perfect for high-volume, premium locations.

Standard features on all Fun Merchants cranes include a time-tested Belgian mechanism; high-quality metal construction; attention grabbing packaging including hot colors, halogen interior lighting, graphic marquees, and scrolling exterior lighting; optional bill acceptors; separate locked cash boxes with coin meters, and custom programming options such as claw adjustments, 10 different pricing options, multiple player units, and variable motor speed.

The crane experts at Fun Merchants point to limitless possibilities when seeking out locations, especially the *Gift Box* line that has found favor with non-traditional route stops such as department stores. National crane operators like Sugarloaf are even touted by such publications as *The Wall Street Journal* and only recently purchased a southwestern route for more than $10,000 per site crane.

This wide range of locations is made possible by the flexibility a crane merchandiser offers operators, allowing them to feature everything from licensed Looney Tunes or N.FL. toys for plush cranes to collectible coins, sports cards, jewelry, and watches for magnetic *Gift Box* cranes.

Upon completion of the lease, the crane can be returned to the distributor, or operators can purchase the unit for a residual fee that varies from unit to unit. This program, which is being underwritten by Firestone Financial Corp., qualifies as a tax-deductible lease under IRS guidelines.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Fun Merchants, (201)438-1300 or (800) 524-2343; Fax (201)438-4837.

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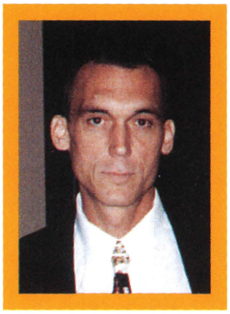
AMOA looks at the FEC market

Are the lines of distinction between street operations and family fun centers blurring? How does one discipline affect the other? What's cookin' with the proposed arcade committee? Any possibility of combining trade shows?


Steve Siegel

The answer to these questions and more can be found in "AMOA Agenda" this month where association president Don Hesch and treasurer Frank Seninsky give their views.

New AMOA board member Steve Siegel of Powerplay Amusements in North Carolina also responded to FEC-related questions.

Regarding FEC growth, Siegel said: "FECs and LBEs continue to open at a rapid rate on a national level. Of course, many of these are established giants that continue to expand their grip on the amusement industry. Many theater chains, bowling centers, etc., have their eyes focused on potentially diversifying their facility by expanding their game room operations into full-blown attractions.

"Expansion continues on a local level with some companies having little knowledge pertaining to our industry. A shakeout is inevitable. I see continued growth and continued casualties."

Important elements from Siegel's standpoint: "Forget a free-standing facility. Success hinges on a diversified location with multiple attractions and (for those with laser tag) reliable laser tag hardware. Much of the success of an FEC can be attributed to a professionally set and operated arcade. Many of our members are seasoned pros in this area and AMOA will continue to stand behind them."

In terms of the marketplace in general, Siegel said, "Street locations continue to be on the decline as a result of very few uprights and kits being released. This total lack of street equipment is causing the customer base to shrink. In comparison, home market releases are much higher. The home market is generating much more excitement due to the vast amount of new games. We have not been so fortunate in coin-op."

On combining the AMOA show with Fun Expo: "In the event there was a merger, it would certainly make one hell of a show capable of taking a bite out of the IAAPA pie."

For comments from Hesch and Seninsky, turn to page 122.

Two-Bit Score offers 16 in 1 kit for *Pac-Man*

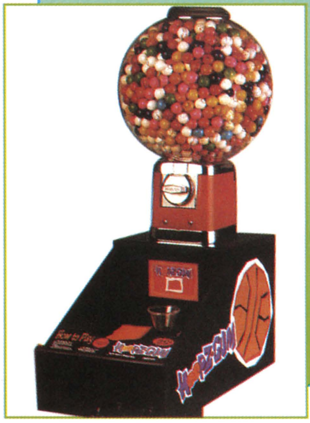
Almost two decades after the release of *Pac-Man*, Two-Bit Score in Austin, Texas, has released a new kit that will include every version of the software ever written for *Pac-Man* or *Ms. Pac-Man*, all in one cabinet. The kit includes two circuit boards that plug into existing sockets on the game board; no soldering is required.

A dip switch allows the operator to switch between any of the 16 different games including original and speedup versions of *Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-Man, Pac-Man Plus, Pac-Attack, Puck-Man, Hangly-Man, Piranha, Heartburn,* and *Race Cars.*

For more information, contact Two-Bit Score, (512)447-8888; fax (512)447-8895; Web site (http://www.pacman.com).

JP Dist. adds to product lineup

JP Distributing is enlarging its product line of bulk vending products. The company now distributes the interactive *Hoopzgum* machine manufactured by Bay Tek.



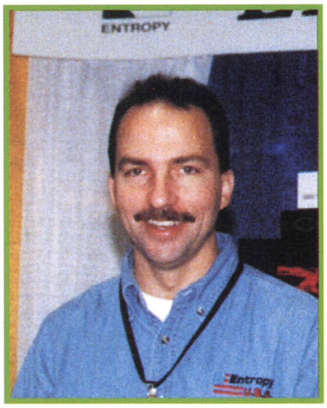
The simple, skill-based vendor asks players to launch a gumball with a plunger, aiming for the minibasketball hoop. A gumball is vended with each successful basket. Jim Chapman of JP reports that the game performs well in family restaurants and indoor sports complexes.

JP also distributes the *Batter Up!* interactive baseball-themed bulk vendor that does well in sports bars, video stores, candy stores, and family restaurants, and the *Gravitron* kinetic bulk vendor that accommodates gumballs, jawbreakers, superballs, or capsules up to one-inch in size. JP can be reached at (888)281-7710.

***Hoopzgum* is now distributed by JP Dist.**

Entropy acquires majority interest in Alter

Henry Yeh



Jeff Blair

Bill Alter

Entropy USA and Alter Enterprises have reached an agreement to transfer the majority ownership of Alter to Entropy USA. The new company will become Entropy Alter Corp.

Entropy USA is the American arm of Entropy International, the Taipei, Taiwan,-based company that produces a variety of amusement games and devices; sells, services, and operates coin-op amusement games; and also manufacturers many other products.

Entropy International chairman Henry Yeh commented: "The acquisition of Alter fits strategically with our expansion plans in the U.S. market. I have known Bill Alter for many years and I have great confidence in his proven track record. Our company will continue to expand its presence in North America."

Entropy USA president and CEO Jeff Blair said, "We now have a viable company in the United States with our sales and service in both Illinois and New Jersey. We see this acquisition as a fast track method to put us in the operations business, while still maintaining a strong presence as a quality supplier of amusement game components.

"Our plans will be to revive Alter Enterprises to its peak period when the company operated in 150 locations. We have also retained the services of Earl Heller, Alter's long-time vice president, to help grow this division and enable us to meet our goals."

Alter president and owner Bill Alter added, "I have known and worked with Entropy for many years and know that this is a great marriage for both companies." Alter Enterprises has been active in selling, operating, and servicing a variety of amusement game products for 20 years, with the primary focus on remote-control boats, cars, and trucks from Tornodo Model Products in the United Kingdom.

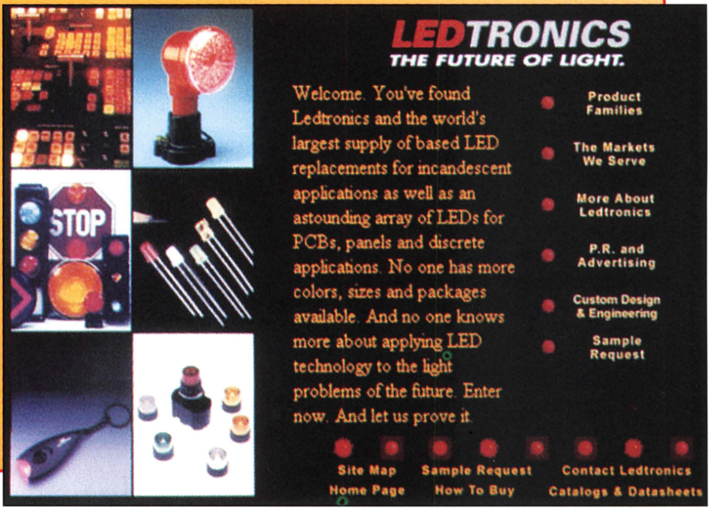
Alter has business relationships with major theme parks and family fun centers worldwide. Bill Alter is also vice president of National Ticket Co. and will continue in that capacity.

The new company, Entropy Alter Corp., will be located in Lakewood, N.J, (732)370-9191 or (973)616-1111.

Ledtronics on the Web

Ledtronics announces a redesigned and greatly expanded Internet site (http://www.ledtronics.com). Ledtronics LEDs support a wide variety of applications from security sensors and decor/interior design lighting to industrial controls.

The company has one of the largest selections of based LED replacements for incandescent applications as well as a wide array of LEDs for PCBs, panels, and other applications. The Web site features custom design and engineering solutions, markets served, and product families. Site visitors may request product samples or more detailed information. Or call Ledtronics, (310)534-1505; fax (301)534-1424.



A peek at the Ledtronics Web site.

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Low-cost 3D terrain creations now possible

Quantum3D and Terrain Experts Inc. have launched a low-cost, PC-based hardware/software bundle optimized for real-time 3D terrain creation and visualization.

Embedded inside the Quantum3D's Quicksilver PC-based integrated visual computing system is Terrex's Terra Vistal terrain database development software, Quantum 3D's Obsidian2 real-time 3D graphics accelerator, and OpenGVS real-time 3D software. The special bundle combines high-performance hardware and unique software and provides superior capability and radically improved price/performance over Unix-based and proprietary solutions for creating terrain for visual simulation and other applications.

According to Sam Abuzalaf, vice president of business development for Terrex, "This bundle provides a new value proposition for developers demanding real world terrain in their applications, with the highest level of performance for building those large area terrain databases."

The combination of Terrex's terrain development software and Quantum3Ds solutions for real-time 3D lowers overall development cost and speeds developer time to market through the use of a single PC platform, and integrated design and playback.

The Quicksilver system supports graphics computing for window terrain tools and dedicated full-screen, real-time visualization and OpenGVS allows instant database previewing and scene management. The Quicksilver PC-based system also provides the highest level of performance at about one-tenth the cost of an equivalent workstation or dedicated system.

"The visualization simulation and training market is key for Quantum3D," said Ross Smith, executive vice president. "By partnering with Terrex for this special system/software bundle, we can provide creators of visual simulation databases a complete turnkey development solution at a far lower price than non-PC-based solutions such as Silicon Graphics or Evans & Sutherland."

The hardware/software combination can be obtained directly from either Quantum3D or Terrex. For more information, contact Smith at Quantum3D, (408)919-9999, fax (408)919-9980, e-mail (otis@quantum3d.com); or Norm Miller at Terrain, (408)272-4907; fax (408)923-3498, or e-mail (nmiller@terrex.com).

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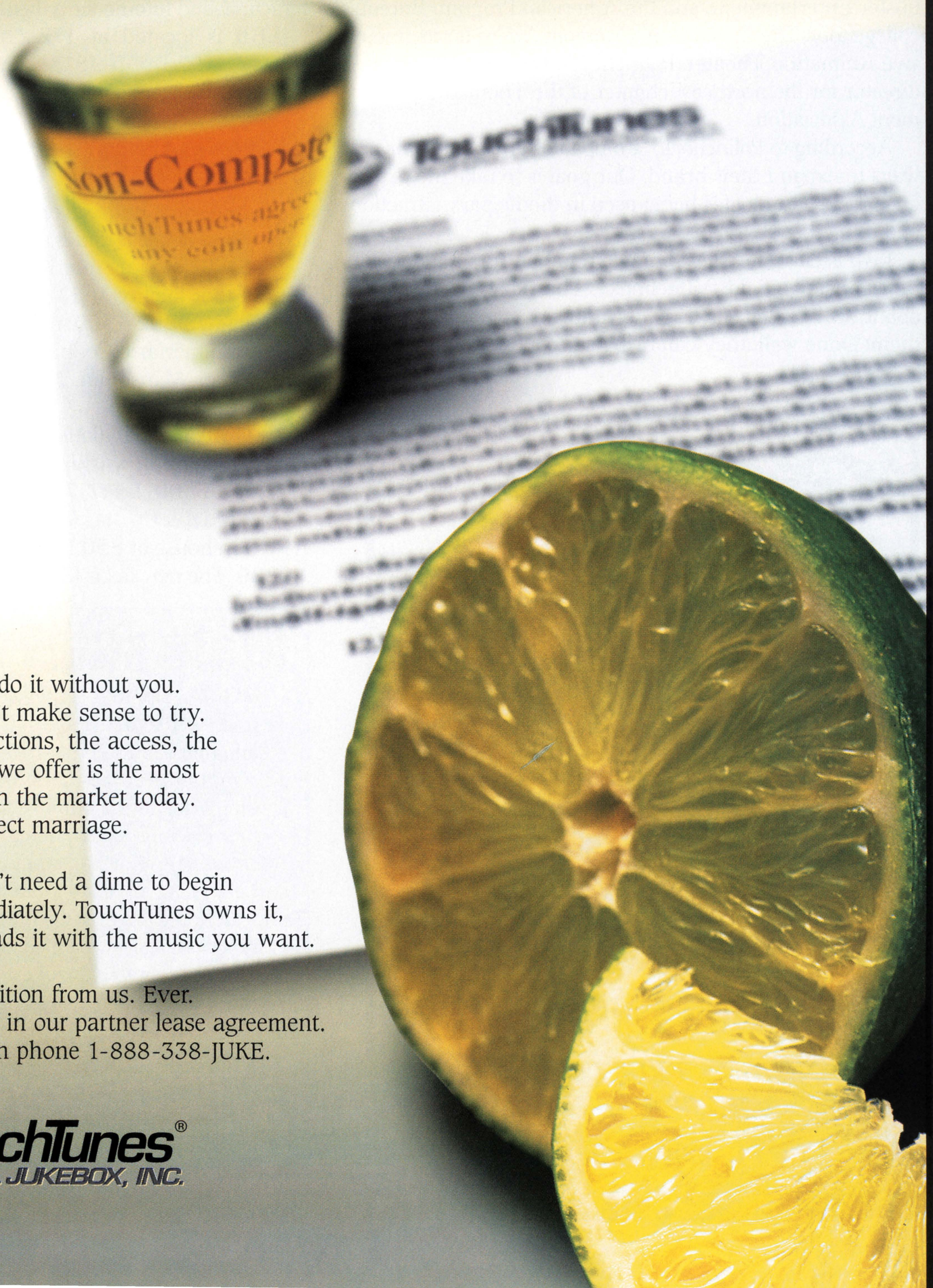

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LBB to develop branding programs

Location-Based Branding is a new venture created by David Polinchock to develop brand identity programs through site-specific venues. The goal of LBB is to reinforce positive relationships between guests and brands.

Polinchock is the founder of CyberEvent Group, one of the first companies to use virtual reality for marketing and promotional programs including tours for Cutty Sark, Blockbuster Entertainment, and the American Program Bureau's college tour. The Group won a Marcom Award for its Immersive Animation Theater. Polinchock also served as the first director for the northeast chapter of the Themed Entertainment Association.

According to Polinchock, "Companies are looking for new ways to expand their brand. Our goal is to take the experience and technologies being used in theme park attractions and bring them to Madison Ave."

LBB is currently developing a number of themed restaurant concepts. Said Polinchock: "The most exciting thing about LBEs is that such a wide variety of companies can use them. Done well, they can bring a great deal of positive attention and allow guests to step into a brand environment. That kind of immersive experience is invaluable in developing brand loyalty."

The company is working with several new technologies including 3D Volumetric Displays that allow images to float in space; synthetic interviews done with personalities or cartoon characters; Omniview camera systems that allow real-time interaction; and Infomedia, a digital database technology.

LBB is located at 172 Orange Road, Montclair, NJ 07042; (973)655-9818; fax (973)655-9811; e-mail (themedguy@yahoo,com).

A moving experience!

Summertime finds several coin-op companies relocating to new and larger facilities:

☛ **SNK Corp. of America** has moved to a new 22,040-square-foot facility at 17 Great Oaks Blvd., San Jose, CA 95119; (408)292-4550; main fax (408)292-4271.

☛ **Bonita Marie Co.** has new headquarters at 1913 Atlantic Ave., Mansquan, NJ 08736; (732)233-4800; fax (732)223-7755.

☛ **DeadSolid Simulations Inc.** has moved to 1192 Sathers Drive, Pittston Township, PA 18640; (800)889-3727 or (717)655-6500; fax (717)655-6595.

☛ **Nordel & Co. Inc.** (dba Amusement Vending Co.) has a new warehouse at 850 East 73rd Ave., Unit 4, Denver, CO 80229. The new fax is (303)274-1754.

State show schedule

MOMA: Members of the Minnesota Operators of Music and Amusements are getting ready for their annual meeting and summer get-together to take place June 10-13 again at the Radisson Arrowwood Resort on Lake Darling, Alexandria, Minn.

Association members will benefit from educational seminars as well as the summer summit for MOMA dart and pool leagues. A golf event is also planned. For more information, phone or fax (612)927-6662.

WAMO: The Wisconsin Amusement and Music Operators Association is looking forward to its annual convention, auction, and trade show June 17-19 at the Fox Hills Resort & Country Club in Mishicot, Wis.

The agenda will include product exhibits, board of directors meeting, legislative and sales tax updates, AMOA update by national association president Don Hesch, insurance information, golf outing, reception, banquet, and auction. For more details, call WAMO, (608)836-6090 or (800)827-8011; fax (608)836-3890.

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MaxFlight arrives at MGM Grand

The MaxFlight VR2002 programmable roller coaster simulator has been chosen as the centerpiece for the new Virtual Reality Amusement Center at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas, Nev. The installation is the result of a joint effort by Mel and Ron Getlan of Smiles Amusements and Jim Nameth, western region manager for the MaxFlight Corp.

An in-house commercial featuring MaxFlight is shown 24 hours a day on the 150-foot video wall in the MGM Grand lobby as well as on video walls throughout the hotel. Future plans include an additional MaxFlight VR2002 and MaxFlight Center featuring the VR2000 interactive flight simulators after completion of the new convention center.

In other MaxFlight news, a MaxFlight Center recently opened in Altoona, Pa., at the Logan Valley Mall. The center is a joint venture between Crown American Enterprises and MaxFlight Corp. Visitors can pilot one of MaxFlgiht's 10 flight simulators or build their own roller coaster ride and take a spin on an indoor virtual reality full-motion cyber coaster.

MGM GRAND
MaxFlight
VR 2002
MaxFlight

The MaxFlight VR2002 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Nev.

For more information on MaxFlight, call (800)563-1880 or (732)942-9898; fax (732)942-1114; e-mail (info@maxflight.com); Web site (http://www.maxflight.com).

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Consolidated companies plan to change the skill crane industry

Consolidated Route Inc., a full-service operator of skill cranes, video games, kiddie rides, and automated teller machines, has acquired four leading amusement industry companies to further its effort toward becoming the "largest operator of skill cranes in the United States by the end of this year," announced Sam Levine, CEO of Consolidated.

Good Stuff Inc. and Win Stuff Inc., both of New York; Mountain Services Inc. of Bristol, Va., and Mission Crane Service Inc., of Anaheim, Calif., are the first, and among the largest, of several anticipated acquisitions to be completed this year.

The combined companies operate over 4,000 skill cranes in restaurants, hotels, movie theaters, and a variety of other retail locations. "This will be the first time that national chains can count on uniformity of product, service, and prizes," explained Jon Langbert, COO of Consolidated. "Our newly combined subsidiary companies design and manufacture high quality skill cranes and plush toy prizes, and provide a consistent national service program to our customers."

Good Stuff, with its extensive line of toys, computer accessories, souvenirs, watches, and clocks is licensed to design custom plush toy products by Disney, Warner Bros., the National Football League (NFL), Major League Baseball (MLB), and the National Basketball Association (NBA). It will be the major supplier of all prizes for Consolidated Route's skill crane companies.

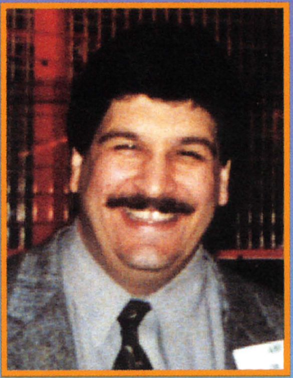
Mission Crane Service is a recognized leader in the manufacture and operation of skill cranes. The company was the first in the industry to introduce machines with exteriors made with a variety of solid, real-wood panels, according to Michael Lewis, CEO of Mission Crane Service since 1989. Mission Crane and its national Group Operators program currently run over 2,200 skill cranes in the United States. The company becomes the primary manufacturer of cranes for the Consolidated Route subsidiaries.

Mountain Services is the leading operator of skill cranes in the fast-growing mid-Atlantic region, noted William Mullins and Allen Buchanan, founders of Mountain Services. They added, "We look forward to accelerating our growth as part of the Consolidated Route family."

The fourth company, Win Stuff, was the second largest operator of skill cranes in the United States prior to the acquisition. The company operates over 2,700 cranes in 22 states. "We're pleased to be part of this exciting new team of combined skill crane companies," said president David Chazen. "Together we can provide seamless coverage, merchandising consistency, and significant profits to any regional or national customer."

Independent route operators interested in learning more about Consolidated Route's acquisition program should contact Sam Levine at (212)333-8616 or Jon Langbert at (864)213-1000.

Personnel announcements

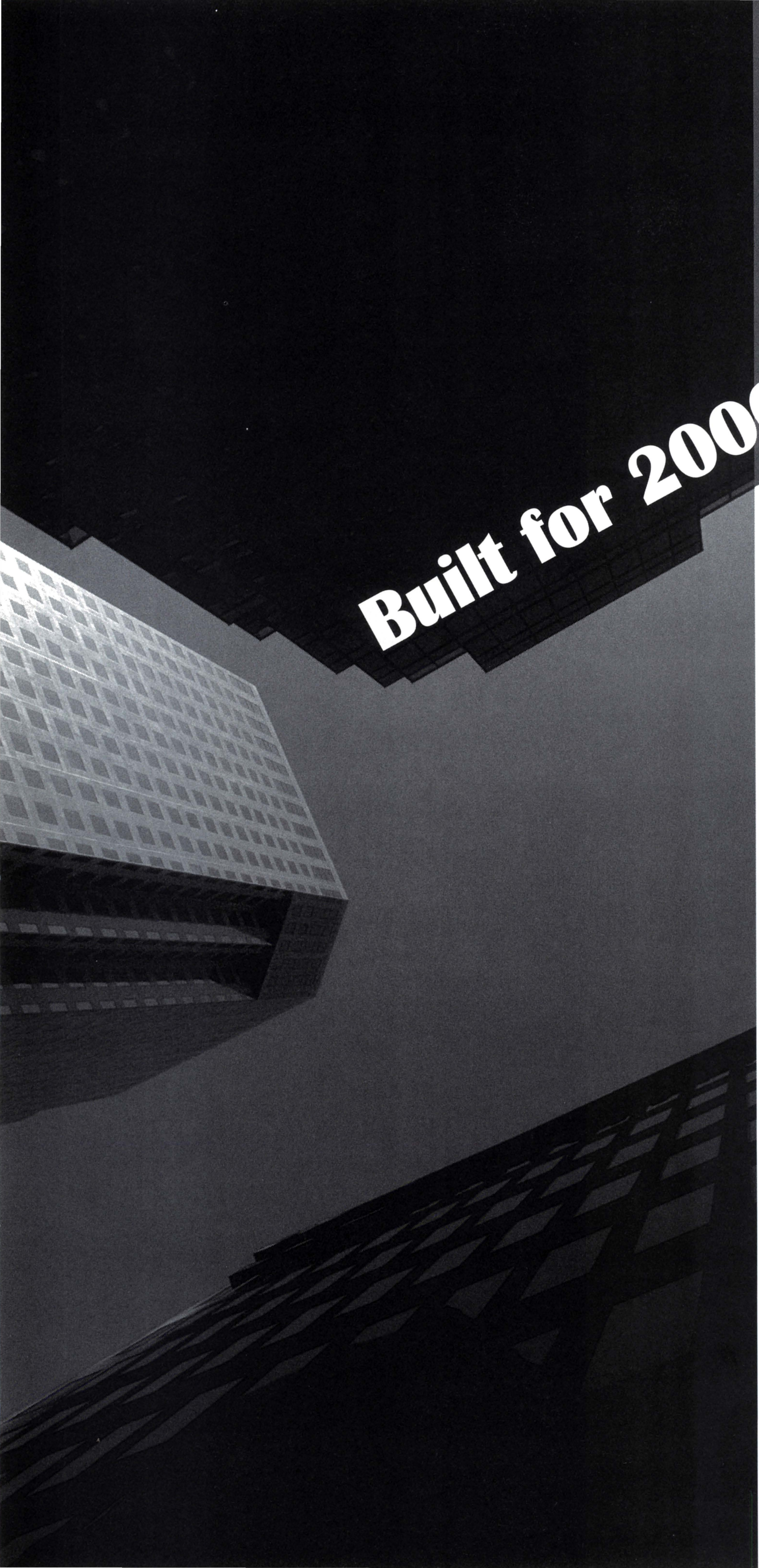

Tom Kane

Tom Kane has joined Merit Industries to take on responsibilities in both the domestic and international arenas, effective May 18. Lou Rudolph, vice president of sales and marketing for Merit, said, "We are very excited about Tom coming on-board. We're happy to have someone with his reputation and experience."

Tom commented, "I'm very excited about the new opportunity and I look forward to contributing to Merit's continued success. It was a difficult decision to depart from Skee-Ball, having been here for 10 years."

Tom began his coin-op career 20 years ago at Six Flags Great Adventure in Jackson, N.J., before joining the ranks of manufacturing at Vari Tech International, which was subsequently acquired by Skee-Ball. In 1993 he moved to Phoenix, Ariz., when Skee-Ball purchased National Sports Games; he served as sales manager. Tom can be reached at Merit's headquarters, (800)523-2760 or (215)639-4700; fax (215)639-5346.

Shane Breaks, director of Namco Europe Ltd., has left the company to pursue other interests. Breaks has been in the coin-op industry since 1975 when he joined the Rowe sales force. His career also included terms with Belam and Atari.



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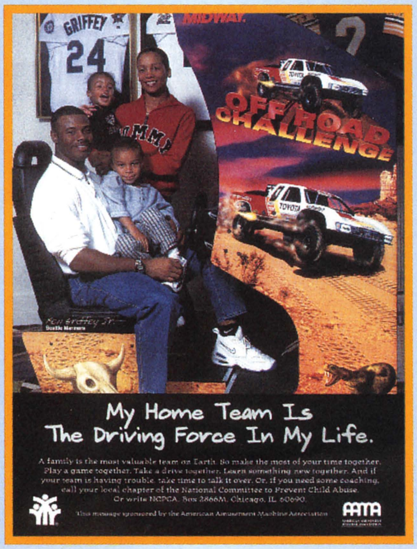
AAMA joins fight against child abuse

Seattle Mariners All-Star Ken Griffey Jr. is depicted on a new public awareness poster designed to spread the word about child abuse prevention. The message: "My Home Team is the Driving Force in My Life."

The poster was produced by the American Amusement Machine Association, the latest in a series of posters featuring well-known celebrities intended to raise public awareness and promote positive relationships between parents and children.

AAMA is working to ensure the message that "a family is the most valuable team on earth" is heard all across the nation. The Griffey poster is being distributed to schools, libraries, and business and youth-oriented organizations across the United States through state chapters of the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse.



A family is the most valuable team on Earth. So make the most of your time together. Play a game together. Take a drive together. Learn something new together. And if your team is having trouble, take time to talk it over. Or, if you need some coaching, call your local chapter of the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse. Or write NCPCA, Box 2866M, Chicago, IL 60690.

This message sponsored by the American Amusement Machine Association

Ken Griffey Jr. and his family grace the "home team" poster from AAMA and NCPCA.

AAMA president Mike Rudowicz said, "Our business revolves around children; therefore, there is no better project for us to focus on than to assist in the fight against child abuse. AAMA is proud to be associated with this organization, and we hope that our efforts assist in reducing the incidence of child abuse in this country."

The Griffey effort marks AAMA's tenth collaboration with NCPCA. Previous posters featured Frank Thomas, John Madden, Nolan Ryan, Jackie Joyner-Kersee, Bo Jackson, and Patrick Ewing.

The Fortune Teller
JUMP SHOT
9999
BONUS!
BUZZY BUZZY BEE
Hoopzgum

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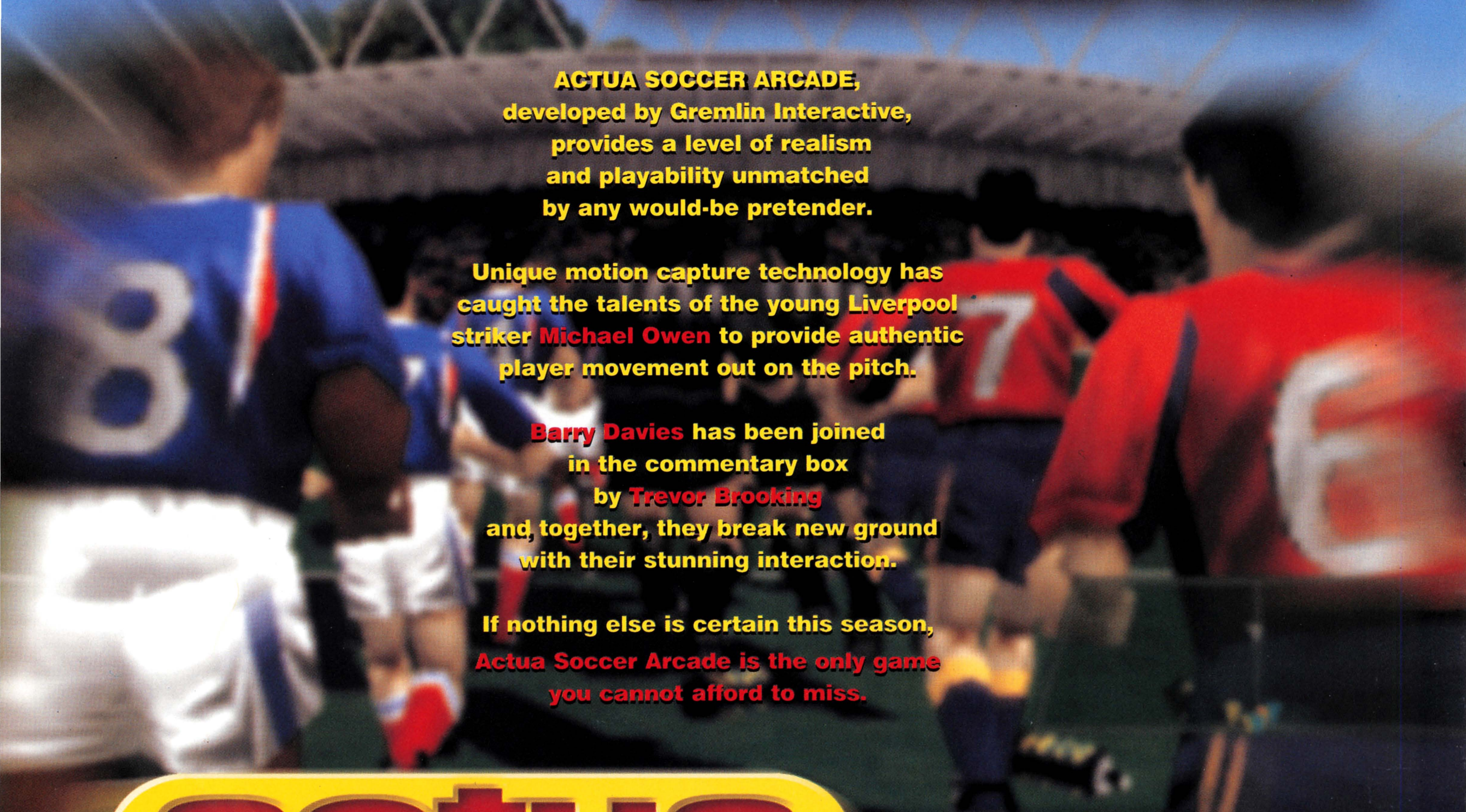

ACTUA SOCCER ARCADE, developed by Gremlin Interactive, provides a level of realism and playability unmatched by any would-be pretender.

Unique motion capture technology has caught the talents of the young Liverpool striker **Michael Owen** to provide authentic player movement out on the pitch.

Barry Davies has been joined in the commentary box by **Trevor Brooking** and, together, they break new ground with their stunning interaction.

If nothing else is certain this season, **Actua Soccer Arcade is the only game you cannot afford to miss.**

actua SOCCER ARCADE tournament

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REAL football just got better...

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Gremlin INTERACTIVE

TRADE SHOW TRACKING

Nightclub & Bar
Convention & Trade Show

August 10-12
Orange County Convention Center
Orlando, Fla.
(800)247-3881 or (601)236-5510

The summer event is targeted to bar, club, tavern, and other hospitality industry owners, operators, bartenders, and DJs. For the third time the show will be joined by the National Beer, Wine & Spirits Beverage Retailer Show for the off-premise market of liquor retailers and wholesalers.

Show producer Ed Meek said, "We believe the union between the on- and off-premise markets allows a dynamic exchange of ideas. We expect this to be our largest show to date, with close to 700 booths and nearly 8,000 in attendance from the United States and abroad."

Seminars will deal with pressing problems such as insurance, liquor liability risks, and political developments. The latest products and services will be on display. *Nightclub & Bar* magazine sponsors the show.

AMOA
Amusement & Music Operators Association

September 17-19
Opryland Hotel
Nashville, Tenn.
(800)937-2662 or (312)245-1021

AMOA will celebrate its 50th anniversary in the country and western capital. The show will feature an international exhibition and education seminars.

"We're excited about this year's show," said AMOA Expo '98 planning chairman Jim Stansfield of Stansfield Vending in LaCrosse, Wis. "We had one of our most successful expos in Nashville in '92 and we're sure this year will be no different."

AMOA is expected to attract over 6,000 industry professionals including owners/operators, managers, distributors/suppliers, and manufacturers of equipment for not only street locations but also larger venues such as family entertainment centers, amusement parks, and shopping centers.

FUN EXPO

October 15-17
Orange County Convention Center
Orlando, Fla.
(888)FUNEXPO or (203)840-5606

Owners and operators of family and location-based entertainment centers, parks, bowling centers, skating rinks, themed restaurants, and other entertainment venues will converge in Orlando for the 8th Fun Expo.

This year's event will showcase a full spectrum of exhibits including video and redemption games, simulators, modular play units, inflatables, kiddie and major rides, miniature golf equipment and supplies, food service, laser tag, bumper boats, and lots more.

A host of educational seminars are planned for the expected crowd of 7,000 from both the domestic and international buying community. Fun Expo is the official trade event of the International Association of family Entertainment Centers; it is managed and produced by Reed Exhibition Companies.

IAAPA 80th Anniversary 1918-1998

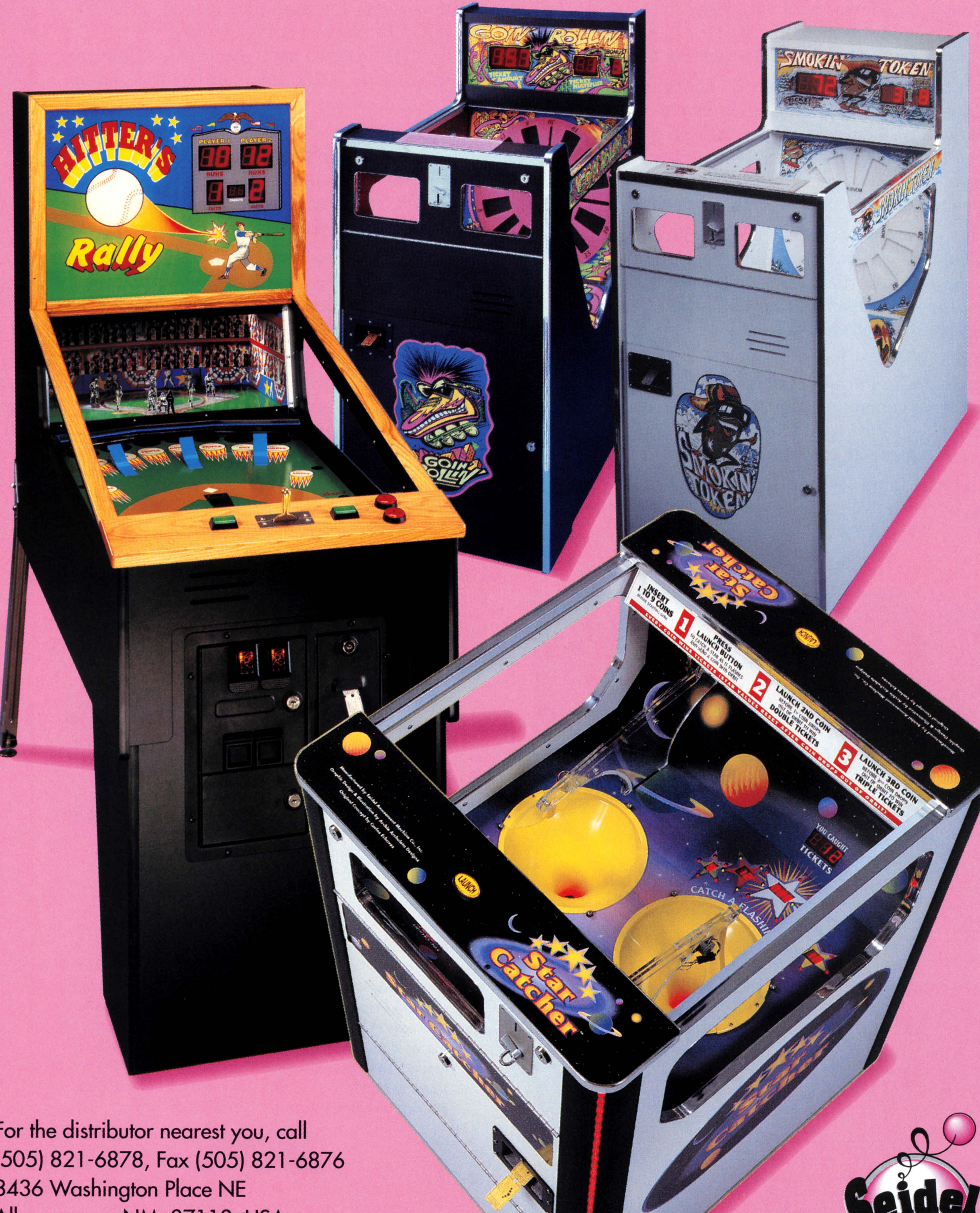
November 17-21
Dallas Convention Center
Dallas, Texas
(703)836-4800 ext. 766

Over 1,200 companies are expected to exhibit products and supplies in 93 categories as the association celebrates its 80th year. High-tech attractions, hard rides, food service, and all types of amusement machines and equipment for the 1999 season and beyond will be on view.

Attendees can choose from over 40 workshops covering topics from creative staffing and merchandising to go-kart operations and the future of themed entertainment. Specialty training courses will also be offered. The Amusement Facility Management School, Training the Trainer Course, and the Certified Pool Operator Course will be back.

Owners and operators of amusement and water parks, FECs, zoos, aquariums, and other leisure and entertainment attractions will see a showcase of current trends.

REDEMPTION ON A GRAND SCALE!


HITTER'S
Rally
PLAYER 1
PLAYER 2
COIN' ROLLIN'
SMOKIN' TOKEN
Star Catcher
INSERT 1 TO 9 COINS
1 PRESS LAUNCH BUTTON
2 LAUNCH 2ND COIN DOUBLE TICKETS
3 LAUNCH 3RD COIN TRIPLE TICKETS
YOU CAUGHT TICKETS
LAUNCH

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8436 Washington Place NE
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Seidel Amusement Machine Co., Inc.

Seidel
AMUSEMENT MACHINE CO., INC.

Have You HEARD?

☛ Lazer Runner laser tag system manufacturer Ascension Productions has completed the second installation in a Peter Piper Pizza location. This one, in Phoenix, Ariz., offers an extensive menu and amusement attractions for all ages. The first Peter Piper laser tag installation was in the Las Vegas location in March. Lazer Runner has over 300 sites worldwide.

☛ According to American Photo Booth Inc. (APBI), Atlus Dream Entertainment has dropped its patent infringement lawsuit against APBI. Atlus brought the suit against APBI in November 1997. APBI says its counterclaim remains pending in Los Angeles federal court against Atlus Dream Entertainment, parent company Atlus Co., and distributor Image Dynamics.

☛ The first in a new series of unique ads for CashCode's line of bill validators was awarded a silver prize at the recent 1998 Summit Awards in Portland, Ore. Known as the clamshell ad, it features a photo of steamed clams followed by copy on the innovative clamshell bill validator design.

☛ WMS Industries has embarked on a major redesign of its pinball products in the face of decreased industry-wide demand for the current generation of pinball games. The company has historically been successful in re-igniting demand for its products. The next generation pinball family will be Pinball 2000.

☛ Midway Games expects to launch four new home video game products on two platforms in the fiscal 1998 fourth quarter ending June 30. The company previously acquired the North American personal computer distribution rights for its home games from GT Interactive Software Corp. and will launch two home games for PCs in the fourth quarter. In addition, three new coin-op video games are expected to be released in the fourth quarter.

☛ Ithaca Peripherals has achieved ISO 9001 certification, one of a series of stringent standards for quality management systems. Ithaca manufactures impact and thermal printers for retail, financial, municipal, and gaming markets.

☛ Digital Micro has a solution for jukebox CDs that skip: the CDM3 compatible player that comes with new player and decoder board. It does not require any additional hardware and will fit existing jukeboxes that have the CDM3. The company also has replacements for CDM4 and CDM12. Call (816)228-5338.

☛ H. Betti Industries and Imperial International are again sponsoring the Tomorrow's Children Fund Lou Avoglia Memorial Golf Tournament June 15 at Forest Hill Field Club in Bloomfield, N.J. Anyone wishing to lend their support can contact H. Betti, (800)524-2342 or (201)438-1300; fax (201)438-4925. ▲

Strip Poker

The One Time "Stacked Against You" Sounds Like a Fair Game.

Meet Taylor. Just one of more than 52 reasons why the new JVL ***Concorde 2®*** is the best touchscreen buy around. *Loaded* with extras. Like the *fastest* game play. The *best* graphics. The *most* games (52 in all, including *Strip Poker*). An *amazing* selection of beautiful "competitors." *Plus,* well-stacked *profits* from the *hottest* machine around. Odds are you'll love it!

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The Unequaled New Concorde 2®

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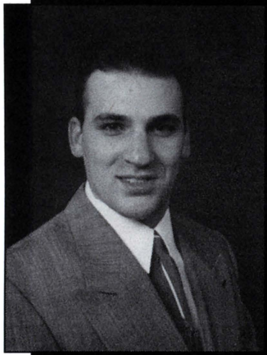
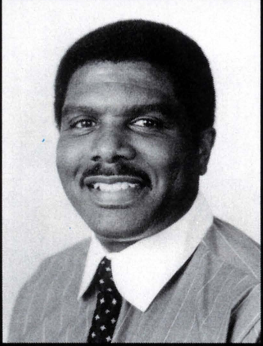
Who's NEWS


GAVIN FAY

GAVIN FAY has joined Lazer-Tron as regional sales manager. His responsibilities will include all territory in the eastern half of the country. Fay was previously with American Vending Sales.

Stated Ron Carrara, vice president of sales for Lazer-Tron, "We welcome Gavin to the Lazer-Tron family and look forward to the assistance he will provide our distributors in the region. We are very excited about our new products; the addition of another sales presence will greatly facilitate service to our customers." Fay can be reached at (847)706-6750.

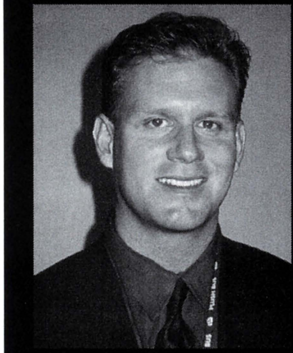

REGGIE MOULTRIE

Dave & Buster's has promoted **REGGIE MOULTRIE** from director of amusements to vice president of games and merchandising. Moultrie was previously head of game operations with Six Flags and vice president with Skee-Ball before coming onboard with D & B's last year.

Dave Corriveau, co-founder of D & B's said, "Reggie has contributed greatly to our continued commitment to offering the best amusement experience in the world. We're proud to have him take on a larger role in our management team."

Co-founder Buster Corley added, "Reggie's exactly the kind of dedicated player we need to keep pace with our aggressive growth, and also make sure that our existing stores maintain the same spirited excitement as our new ones."

Moultrie's duties will be focused on procuring equipment, rotating and disbursing thousands of games in the company's ongoing inventory, as well as the planning and management of D & B's extensive retail and redemption merchandise program. He can be reached at the D & B headquarters, (214)357-9588; fax (214)357-0917. (See an interview with Moultrie on page 96).


CHUCK MORTON

CHUCK MORTON has been named director of U.S. coin-op sales for Interactive Light. He was formerly vice president of U.S. sales for Innovative Concepts in Entertainment, which served as a distributor for Interactive Light's products.

Morton's coin-op career includes being national sales director for H.Betti Industries when the Fun Merchants division was formed. He also served as national sales director for Acclaim Coin-Op. Morton can be reached at (502)254-9615; fax (502)254-2640.

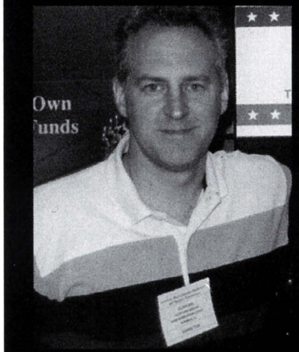
BAILEY BEEKEN

Trade show veteran **BAILEY BEEKEN** will head the new trade show division of Adams Business Media. Beeken, who is best known in coin machine circles for originating the Fun Expo, brings 16 years of experience to her new post.

She is leaving her recent position as vice president of Reed Exhibition Companies, which purchased the Fun Expo last year, to become director of trade shows and conferences for Adams.

Adams is a business to business publishing company that recently acquired Pearson PLC group of GIS trade publications and related events. Its first group of conferences includes the GIS '98/RT '98 in Canada and the Business Geographics Conference in Dallas, Texas.

Beeken commented, "Because Adams targets a number of different market segments, we're in a perfect position to explore event opportunities within our own publishing groups. Also exciting is the prospect of bringing in new market groups by acquiring or launching events outside of our current publishing portfolios." Beeken can be reached at (212)827-4715; fax (212)827-4720.


CLIFFORD BOLEN

The Northwestern Corp. has appointed **CLIFF BOLEN** as vice president of operations. Bolen is the son of Waldo "Pat" Bolen, Northwestern's vice president of sales, and nephew of Richard Bolen, president and CEO.

While Cliff Bolen has pursued a career as a CPA he said that "working for Northwestern has always been in the back of my mind. I've been drawn to it since I was a kid, and not just for the gumballs!" At one point he operated a small route of Model 60s and Triple Plays. He added, "I'm very excited about this opportunity and look foward to learning from and working with two very experienced bulk vending minds—Richard and Pat." Cliff Bolen can be reached at (815)942-2278; FAX (815)942-3141. ▲

SHOW ME THE MONEY!

At the National Crane Network that's exactly what we do. Watch your dollars increase with...

- No $1,000 slotting fee
- Best pricing on Skill Crane Equipment and Plush products
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- A team dedicated to serving YOU, the operator

So stop wondering what you could be making... pick up the phone and call...

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1-888-262-6747

PLUSH 4 PLAY

and we'll **"Show you the money!"**

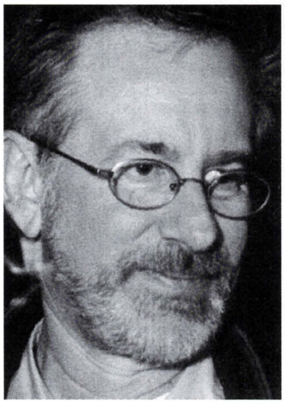
BEYOND THE PLAYFIELD

❶ ❷ **STEVEN SPIELBERG**, one of the creative forces behind Sega GameWorks entertainment complexes, spent time at the GameWorks Tempe facility at the Arizona Mills Mall on a spring visit to see family and friends. Spielberg enjoyed several games, from *Bass Fishing* to *NFL Blitz*, and the only four-person air hockey game, *Hockey Stadium*. He also won his round of the eight-man *Indy 500* game. According to GameWorks Tempe general manager Pat Shroll, Spielberg's visit "wasn't a mob scene. People recognized him and he politely greeted them all." Before leaving, Spielberg sampled several menu items and particularly liked the chili fries. *(Photos by Eric Charbonneau/Berliner Studio, Los Angeles, Calif.)*

❶

SEGA
Hockey Stadium
SHARKS VS WINGS
0 TIME 1
Exciting 3

❷

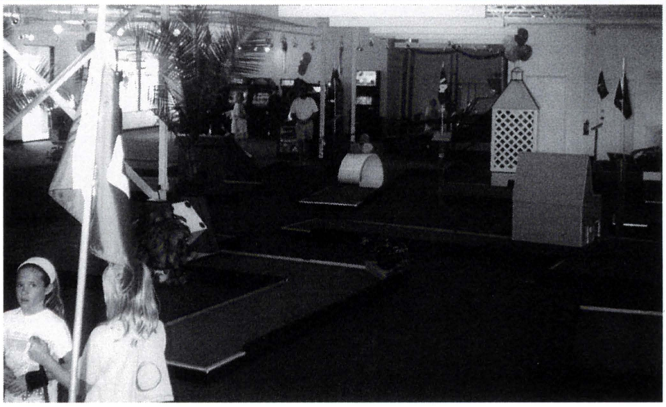


THE KODAK IMAGE MAGIC FANTASY THEATER from Kodak's themed entertainment division has been working overtime in Memphis, Tenn., at the Tim McCarver Stadium's Powertel Plaza. The compact studio allows customers to have their pictures taken with a Kodak digital camera against a green screen background similar to those used in movie digital effects, then magically inserted into a fantasy scene of their choice. Fans can appear as the subject of their own baseball card or have stadium graphics or logos inserted into their portraits. They can take away 5x7, 8x10, or wallet-size prints, baseball card creations, or posters of their fantasy photos. Allie Prescott, president and general manager of the Memphis Redbirds, said, "The people of Memphis are enthusiastic about Redbirds' games. This is the perfect way for us to provide more entertainment value from the game experience that they can take home and enjoy."

❸

❸ **CAROLYN HESKETT** recently celebrated 35 years in the amusement industry as sales manager of the carnival division for amusement ride company Sellner Mfg. of Faribault, Minn. She was honored by her peers at the IISF trade show in Gibsonton, Fla. An all-expense paid trip to Puerto Rico for Carolyn and her husband was a special gift, courtesy of Sellner, in recognition of her contribution to the company. Carolyn has witnessed major advancements in the technology and appearance of rides. She commented, "The things I enjoy most about this industry are the wonderful people I meet and the exciting changes that have taken place over the years."

❹



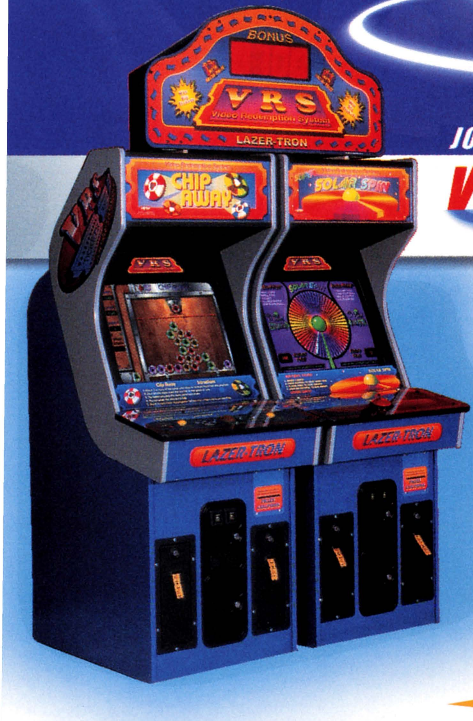
❹ **TIM FLAVELLE** of Easton, Pa., celebrated his first year in the miniature golf business. His indoor court from LOMMA Miniature Golf allows guests to play in comfort all year long. Flavelle is working on a second location and has long range plans for a chain of fun centers, according to LOMMA.

VRS™

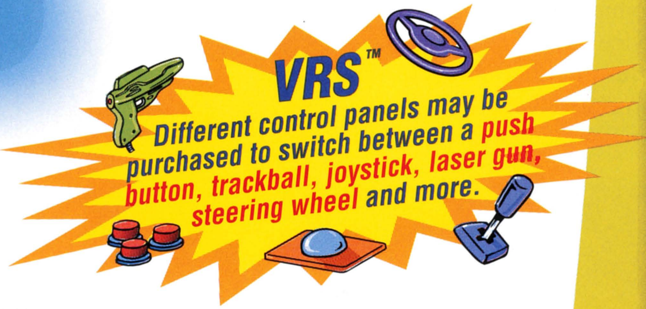
JOIN THE REVOLUTION... REDEMPTION FOR THE MILLENNIUM...

VIDEO REDEMPTION SYSTEM™

Low Cost Redemption Kits are Here!


BONUS
VRS
Video Redemption System
LAZER-TRON
CHIP AWAY
SOLAR SPIN
VRS
LAZER-TRON

VRS Cabinets allow operators to buy a redemption cabinet once and **rotate in new games for years to come.** Lazer-Tron currently has **6 different games available with many more to come.** CD ROM update kits allow owners to change out their games easily.



VRS™

Different control panels may be purchased to switch between a push button, trackball, joystick, laser gun, steering wheel and more.

Progressive Bonus:

Two or more units may be linked with a progressive bonus display system which will show the **bonuses** available to be won by the players.

Insta-Prize:

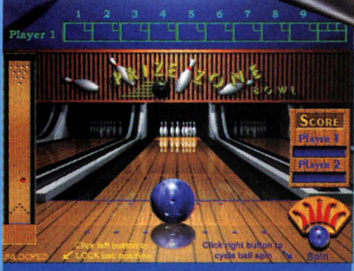
Each game features Lazer-Tron's patented Insta-Prize™ system that allows players to **win prizes such as Cokes, TVs and rounds of miniature golf on a single game.**

Insta-Prize!

VRS™ Cabinets Feature:

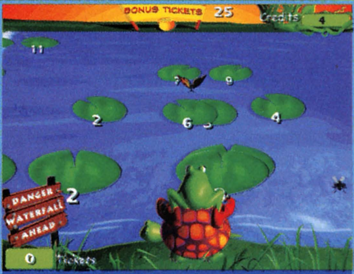
- CD ROM game updates
- Ticket dispenser(s)
- UL, CE, & FCC listing
- 27" high resolution monitor
- Coupon printer
- Pentium level computer
- 16 bit stereo sound
- Control panel updates
- Size: 25 1/4" W x 38" D x 74 1/2" H

Games Available


Player 1
PRIZE ZONE BOWL
SCORE
PLAYER 1
PLAYER 2
Spin

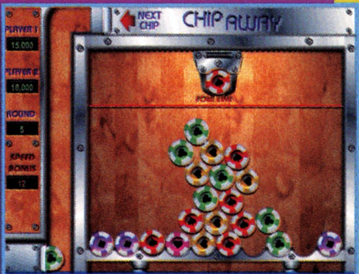
Prize Bowl™

A terrific 1 or 2 player game where the player uses the trackball to propel the bowling ball at the pins.


BONUS TICKETS 25
CREDITS 4
DANGER WATERFALL AHEAD

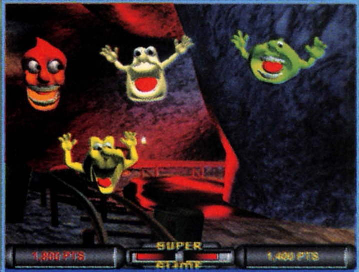
Hoppin Harry™

Our new family oriented FROG jumping game in which the players attempt to jump across the river on lilly pads. The further they get, the more they win.


NEXT CHIP
CHIP AWAY
PLAYER 1
PLAYER 2
ROUND
SPEED BONUS

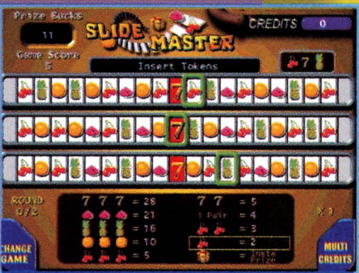
Chip Away™

A novelty puzzle game which challenges players to link up 3 of the same color chips in order to clear them from the playfield.



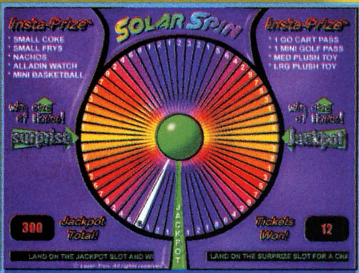
Miner's Revenge®

Our #1 rated 2 player video shooting game in which the players try to blast as many ghosts as possible while being hurled through the haunted mine shaft.


Prize Bucks
SLIDE MASTER
CREDITS 0
Insert Tokens
ROUND
CHANGE GAME
MULTI CREDITS

Slide Master™

Our new skill-stop featuring five progressive jackpots will keep the players lined up. Also available in a family oriented animal theme.


Insta-Prize
SOLAR SPIN
Insta-Prize
Surprise
Jackpot
Jackpot Total!
Tickets Won!
300
12

Solar Spin®

Our #1 rated skill-stop game which challenges the players reflexes to stop the spinning light bar on the jackpot slot.

LAZER-TRON®
LIGHT YEARS AHEAD!

www.lazertron.com

For more information contact: Lazer-Tron, 4430 Willow Road
Pleasanton, CA 94588 • Ph: (925) 460-0873 • Fax: (925) 460-0365

BEYOND THE PLAYFIELD

❺ At the recent **NATIONAL BULK VENDORS ASSOCIATION** trade show in Coronado, Calif., Kurt Ostler of O.K. Mfg. introduces his sons Zachary, Joshua, and Spencer, who enjoyed receiving vended prizes.

❺

SHOW SPECIAL
$29.95
PER 5 GAL. BUCKET

❻ **STRAYLIGHT CORP.** customized a virtual reality game for Motorola's trade show promotion at CTIA's Wireless '98 show in Atlanta, Ga. Inside StrayLight's 3D-XTC platforms, attendees zoomed through a sci-fi tunnel maze, encountering animated wireless phones along the way.

❻

❼ **DICKIE MCCANNELL** of Operators Distributing Inc. was honored with the North Carolina Amusement and Music Association's President's Service Award at the association's April convention and trade show in Charlotte, N.C. The award, announced by NCAMA president Vaughn Feimster, is given annually to a member who has made a major contribution to the coin machine industry. McCannell has 30 years of experience in the amusement world. He is not only the one operators call for sales assistance and expertise, he is also considered a true friend. Congratulations Dickie! He and his wife are all smiles after the presentation.

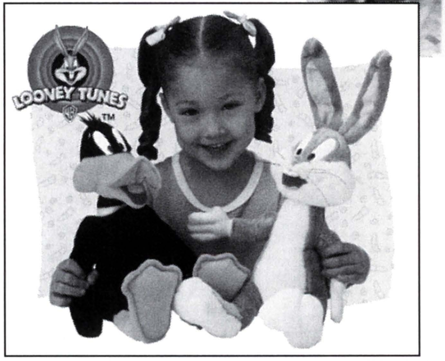
Other trade show highlights included an exhibit floor featuring the latest in coin-op equipment, a banquet with entertainment, the Jim Nesbitt Memorial Golf Tourney, and an appearance by AMOA president Don Hesch.

❼

❽ **PLAY-BY-PLAY ACE/ACME** drew a large share of attention at the recent Toy Fair with its Baby Looney Tunes products for its retail division. The line includes the Talking Tunes, which use the same infrared technology as Talking Tots. Talking Tunes feature all-time favorites Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck; Penny & Patches, with Patches the dog doing tricks; Knickie & Knockie, preschoolers saying knock-knock jokes; and Singing & Swinging Tweety Bird.

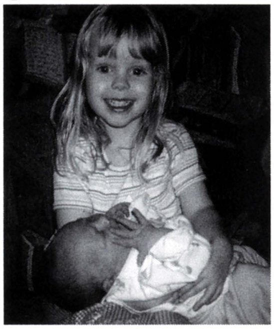
On the crane and arcade side of the company, Play-By-Play has made a total commitment to fulfill the specific needs of operators with an arcade line that boasts extensive glow-in-the dark products, inflatables, licensed novelty items, candy, and generic product. The crane division is focused on licensed product keyed to the seasons and special holidays.

❽



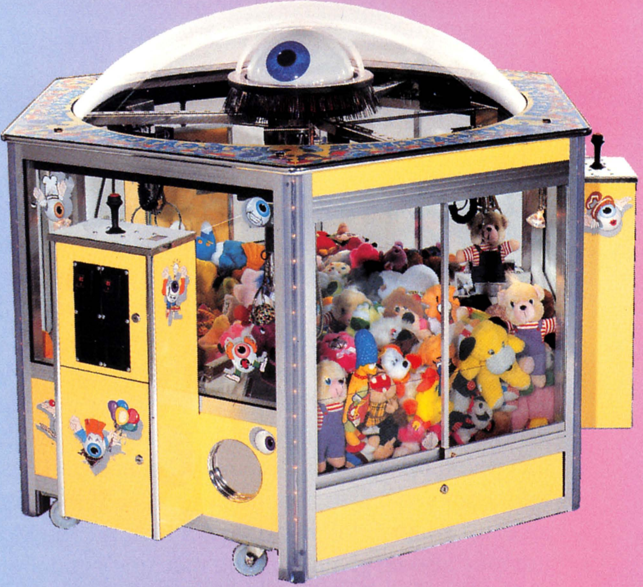
❾ **LOU RUDOLPH** of Merit Industries and his wife welcomed a new baby girl into their family April 4 when Tessa was born. Smiling big sister Janina, now 3-1/2, holds Tessa, who is snuggled in baby blankets. ▲

❾

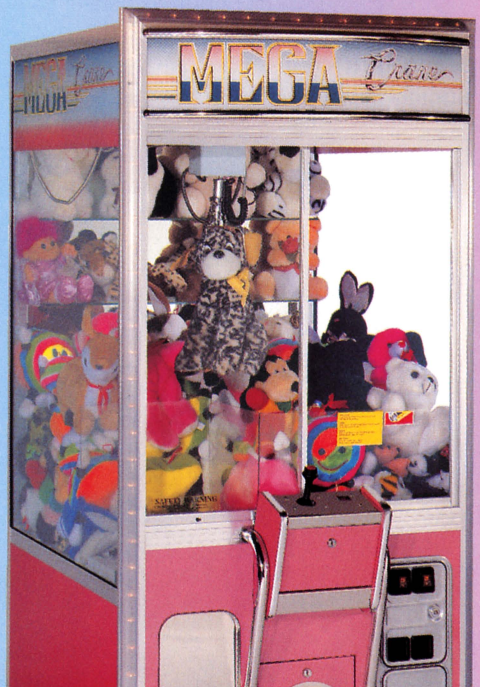


A new lineup for a New Year!

FUN MERCHANTS Cranes



COSMIC Crane
ELAUT


MEGA Crane
ELAUT

TOPPER Quattro 4

FUN merchants

H. BETTI INDUSTRIES, INC.

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800-524-2343 • 201-438-1300 • FAX 201-438-4837

Downhill Bikers

Namco presents its newest high-tech, high-touch simulator game, *Downhill Bikers*, a two-in-one game that can link four players in a mountain bike racing competition. Capitalizing on the worldwide popularity of the sport, *Downhill Bikers* simulates the real thing for game players.

There are four characters to choose from, each with an array of unique air tricks which are performed at various jump sites by using different combinations of handle, pedals, and brake lever actions. The game features over 40 air tricks. Three hidden characters can also be found, and players are advised to keep an eye on Namco's Web site for codes.

Players also select one of two courses, the Speed Course or the Technical Course. The Speed Course is recommended for novice riders who are not familiar with the variety of air tricks, while the Technical Course utilizes some of the same paths narrowed to focus the player's technique.

The object of the game is to be the first player down the hill and across the finish line. How fast a player can pedal is not as important as how well they maneuver the rugged terrain. There are rivers to cross, grassy knolls to ride through, and gravel paths that cause the bike to slip. The player finding the path of least resistance will ultimately win the race.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Namco-America, (630)238-2248; fax (630)238-9333; Web site (http://www.namco.com).

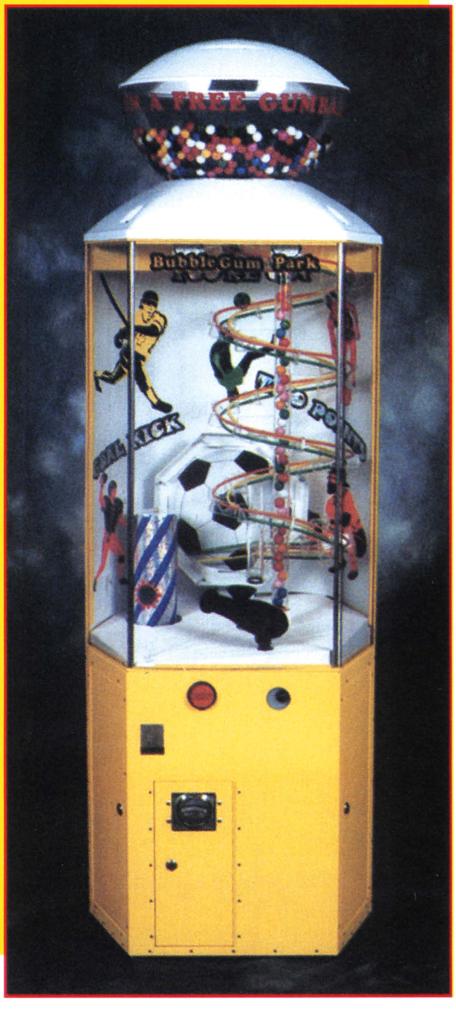
Sportsmania

Bubble Gum Park introduces its next generation interactive vending machine, the *Sportsmania*, which combines the motion of kinetics, the interactivity of a game, and the challenge of earning a reward, all three of which help increase the unit's profitability.

Sportsmania offers customers the chance to interact with the machine following a kinetic show in which the vended gumball rolls down a spiral into a revolving ball. At that point, the gumball falls into a cannon and the customer aims and fires at a moving target. If the target is hit, an extra gumball follows right behind and an extra premium may also be given with the machine's coupon option.

Bubble Gum Park has developed a coupon dispenser as an added value with the customer's gumball. With this dispenser, *Sportsmania* adapts to a redemption center environment or becomes a point-of-sale purchase merchandiser.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Bubble Gum Park, (800)851-7674; fax (801)484-2289; Web site (http://www.bubblegumpark.com).



Zero Point
UNICO
SHOOT AT A TARGET
START

Zero Point

Gamevision Corp. announces the release of the new, non-violent shooting game, *Zero Point*, a horizontal, two-player shooting game with awesome sound and graphics. Gamevision is handling exclusive distribution for international video game developer Unico Electronics.

Players get a chance to select the level of difficulty at the beginning of the game. Levels include Very Easy, Easy, Hard, and Very Hard. The action begins with targets and objects appearing on the screen. The player has to determine which ones to shoot and which ones to avoid because there is not enough time to blast everything on the screen.

If the player hits enough of the right targets–distinguished by color—in the allotted time, the game continues to the next stage. After each scene (a total of 52), the game displays the player's performance results and scores.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Gamevision Corp, (510)763-1991; fax (510)763-1278.

Shootin Hoops 2000

Meltec announces its newest redemption game, *Shootin Hoops 2000*, which combines the long lasting appeal of the classic Meltec cannon with the proven popularity of basketball games.

The game's two-tiered basket design delivers twice as much fun as players race the clock to rack up big scores and big-ticket payouts. A lighted backboard also offers a double score feature that is more exciting than a glass-shattering slam-dunk.

Shootin Hoops 2000 offers a high score of the day feature that rewards hot shooters with an adjustable ticket bonus, and the game design is interchangeable with the company's other 2000 series games, *Big Mouth 2000* and *Knockdown 2000*. Dimensions are 108" long x 48" wide x 93" high.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Meltec, (503)643-8312; fax (503)644-0558.

Shootin Hoops 2000
SCORE
TIME

Tornado 1000, The Cat

Valley Recreation Products introduces its two newest table game products, the *Tornado 1000* standard foosball table and *The Cat* standard pool table.

The *Tornado 1000* features light wood grain, Anigre laminate, suede finish, a new ball drop dispensing system, rounded metal top and down-corners, patented precision-ground urethane balls, compression-relief rod-to-wall bumpers, fitted and pinned octagon wood handles and men, and centerless-ground hollowed tubular steel rods.

The table also comes with a three-man goalie for full field play, perfectly proportioned goal with rattle plat for a crisp sound, precision aligned players, playfield markings and graphics, precision weighted and balanced formed men, and a hinged cabinet for easy access and service.

Features on *The Cat* include light wood grain, Anigre laminate, suede finish, round color-coordinated die cast corners and rail cap moldings, imported slate, steel slate supports, one-person levelers, interchangeable components, one-piece polyethylene ball collector chute, magnetic cue ball separator, reinforced fiberglass legs, quick-change pocket liners, imported Belgian balls, and 21 oz. table cloth.

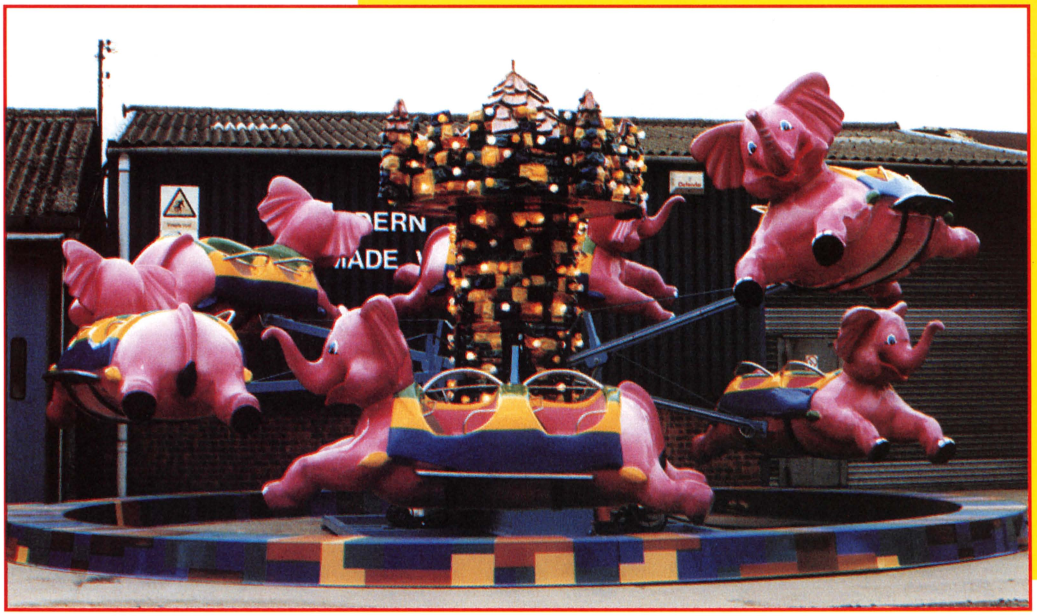
For more information, or distributor referral, contact Valley Recreation Products, (517)892-4536 or (800)248-2837; fax (517)892-6513.

Flying Elephants

Modern Products presents the latest addition to its line of family rides, *Flying Elephants*, which is available in park and fully trailer-mounted versions with four, six, or eight cars.

This attractively presented ride features elephant seats flying around an eye-catching, illuminated center castle. On-board systems put riders in control, flying up to three meters and more while being held safely in place.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Modern Products Limited, +44 (0)1724 783157; fax +44 (0)1724 782120.



Sega Rally 2

Sega GameWorks announces the release of the second version of its popular driving game from 1995, *Sega Rally Championship.* The new game, *Sega Rally 2,* will be available in two versions, deluxe and twin.

The deluxe version puts the racer in the driver's seat and utilizes a new motion-based system to rock the driver back and forth, side to side, and up and down to feel those famed diverse course conditions. A protective roll cage is also featured. The new twin seats are tall and sleek, characteristic of the revolution in racing seats.

Sega Rally 2 is equipped with a unique surround sound system using six speakers–four for extraordinary sound and two more for background music. Also built into the game is a shaker unit under the seat and floorboard to create the rumbling simulation of a real race car.

Complementing the effect of a true-to-life racing experience is the precision handling and steering technology that enables the player to feel the drift as competitors' cars race by. The player can even spin 360s by pulling up on the hand brake.

The Model 3 Step 2.0 Board captures the stunning graphics and attentively recreates the car body styles and course. This technological board provides at least one million polygons per second with full texture mapping graphics that refine sharp edges even more than the original game. The scenic races are viewed through a 50" monitor for the deluxe version and two 29" monitors for the twin version.

To begin, players choose a race mode, course, car, and transmission. The goal is to pass all the checkpoints within the time limit and complete the course. The race modes to choose from include Championship and Practice, and the default course is the Desert (novice level). There are also Mountain (intermediate), and Snowy (expert) courses.

If any of the courses are complete, the player is faced with the expert-level Riviera course, which is also available as a direct choice in the Practice mode. The six car choices include a Lancer Evolution 4, Subaru Impressa WRC '97, Lancia Stratos Gr4, Peugeot 306 MAXI, Ford Escort WRC, and the Toyota Corolla WRC. All are available with automatic or manual transmissions, and there is a choice of driving perspectives–driver's eye or rear of the car.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Sega GameWorks, (650)802-3008; fax (650) 802-3729.

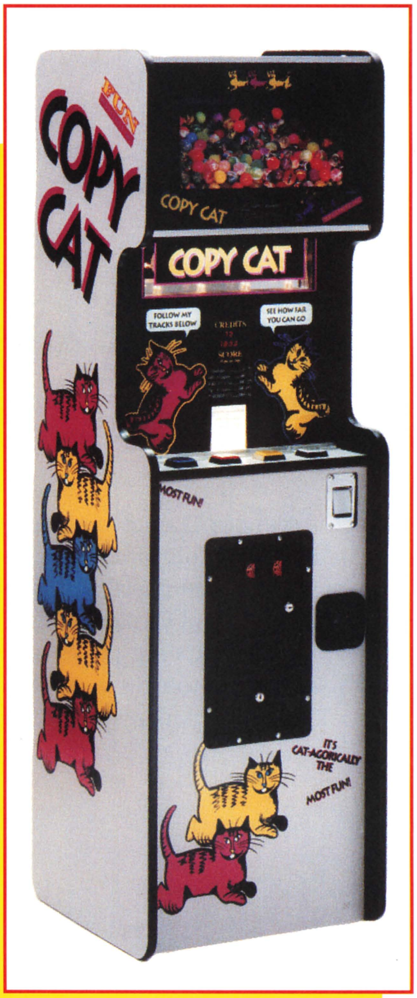
SEGA RALLY
CHAMPIONSHIP
SEGA
1
2
SEGA RALLY 2

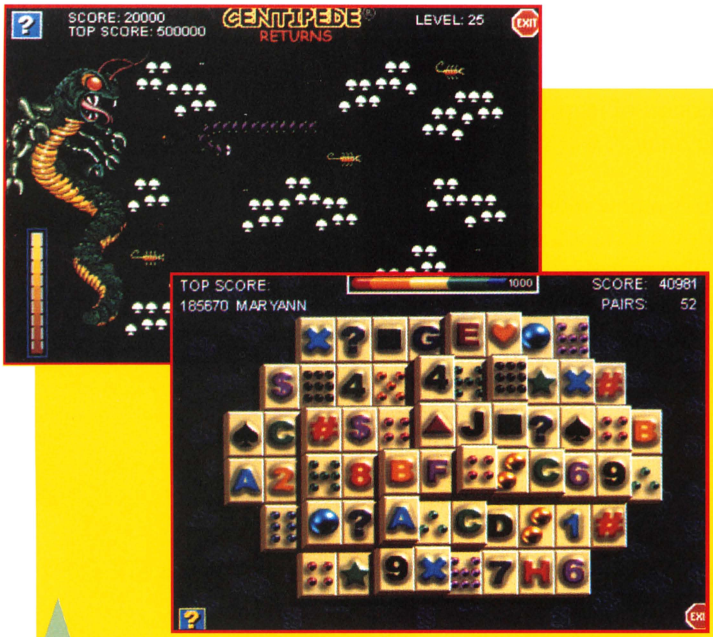
Copy Cat cabinet

Fun Industries introduces a brand new cabinet for its classic vending game *Copy Cat.* The new cabinet was designed to add color to the basic game while retaining the color scheme established by the company for its newer releases.

Copy Cat is a memory game that requires the player to repeat sound effects and flashing colors. Every player wins a prize of rubber or toy balls, candy, gum, or capsules.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Fun Industries, (309)755-1684 or (800) 747-1144; fax (309)755-1684; Web site (http:// www.pro-motion. com/fun).





Touchmaster 4000

Midway Games introduces *Touchmaster 4000*, the latest major software update for the popular *Touchmaster* touch screen unit. Six new games have been added, which brings the total menu to 29 unique games.

Among the new games is a classic revisited: *Centipede Returns.* This touch screen version of Atari's early '80s hit video is one of many nostalgic titles planned for future releases. Midway and Atari have the rights to a huge library of all-time favorites.

Strip Search is an erotic version of the word search game. As players discover words hidden in a puzzle, more and more of a sexy photo is displayed. Players can choose the gender of the model, and there are several categories for clues including Sports, Names, and even Sexy for racier clues.

Go Wild! is a fast game where players choose from a hand of five cards and try to stack as many as possible in one or more of three discard piles. Cards may be matched by suit or number, and animated graphics mark the eights as wild.

Flight Deck challenges players to choose from the best poker hand from a field of 15 cards. *Touchmaster* deals new cards every other hand until all cards in the deck have been cleared from the playfield. Points are awarded according to the kind and combination of hands the player chooses.

Jamba is a game of timing where players try to stack brightly colored heads onto totem poles. A rapidly-sliding picture frame at the top of the screen scans along a row of multicolored heads. Touching the screen causes the head that is inside the frame to drop onto the totem below. Players need to time the touches to stack heads in the right color order to maximize points.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Midway Games, (773)961-1000; fax (773)961-1060; Web site (http://www.midway.com).

Mr. Bill

Toy 'n Joy presents the new Mr. Bill dollar bill acceptor that takes dollars, quarters, dimes, and nickels, allowing for variable vend pricing from five cents up to $99.95.

The acceptor is a slim 8" wide and features a self-cleaning coin chute (patent-pending) to minimize breakdowns, and multiple or single-vend options that registers credits or returns change immediately.

Mr. Bill attaches to all Toy 'n Joy cabinet-style machines (pictured with Models 904 and 905) and will soon be available to retrofit Northwestern, Oak, and A & A machines. An information retrieval system is optional.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Toy 'n Joy, (888)869-6569 or (920)739-5269; fax (920)739-0370.

toy 'n joy
toy 'n joy

Double Decker Northern Beaver Towers

Now you can offer double the product selection in the same amount of space with Machine-O-Matic's *Double Decker Northern Beaver Towers*. The lower unit is designed for bulk items; the upper vends gum, novelty capsules up to 3" in diameter, or more bulk items.

Units are independent in that each has a dedicated coin mech and both share a single collection area for cash. Vend prices can be 25 cents, 50 cents, 75 cents, or $1.

The real value is in the selection, wider variation of product, and the ability to add or subtract to the set up while you tailor machines to locations. A variety of cabinet colors are available.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Machine-O-Matic Ltd., (800)265-6772 or (905)836-4700; fax (905)836-4737; e-mail (sales@beavervending.com); Web site (http://www.beavervending.com).

Kinetic Kid

O.K. Mfg. debuts *Kinetic Kid*, a kinetic-style bulk vendor that features chasing rope lights, rear graphics package, barrel locks, and battery-operated sound.

Gumballs stored at the top of the colorful cabinet make their way along entertaining paths where they twist, turn, and jiggle their way to the players' hands.

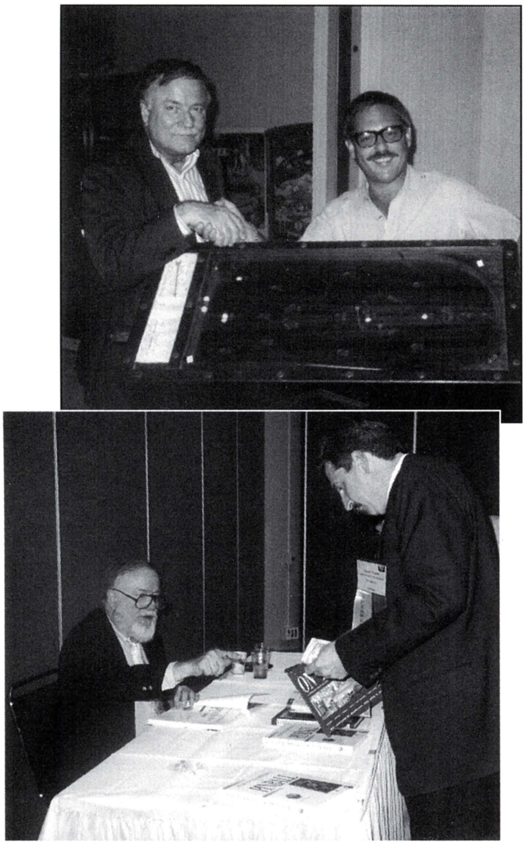
Kinetic Kid holds three cases of product; it vends 850-count and 1080-count product, and has a modification for 1430-count product. No electricity is required for the machine. Dimensions are 23" wide x 15" deep x 75" tall. Weight is 120 lbs.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact O.K. Mfg., (800)748-5480 or (801)974-9116; fax (801)974-5458. ▲

Kinetic Kid
25¢
3

IN MEMORY

Richard Bueschel



TOP: Dick loved old games, like this old *Whiffle* game he helped Alan Yaffe buy during a Pinball Expo.

BOTTOM: Dick was the featured speaker at the Century Club meeting held during ASI '97.

At press time last month we heard of the death of Richard Bueschel. Although we had a paragraph to let the industry know the sad news, his life deserves much more space. Dick was never a manufacturer, distributor, or operator yet he knew more about the coin machine industry than just about anyone else. He wrote a series of books outlining the history of the industry dating back to the days of Marie Antoinette. A conversation with Dick always centered around games or the people who made them. It was obvious he loved what he did and the industry he wrote about.

He was born in 1926, a golden time for the country, and grew up in the 1930s, a golden time for the industry. He recalled the dark days of the Depression that ravaged the country, but fondly noted that the coin machine companies were the only ones hiring during those times. Maybe it was then that he realized there was something special about the industry that he would one day write about. While as a boy his interest focused on the baseball games sponsored by the coin-op companies, he would later say that he came to respect those who drove the industry.

In the early days, Dick said everything about the industry was positive. "Although it was sometimes thought to be associated with the mafia, that wasn't the case. Crime does not like payrolls and inventory," he said. He added that since Chicago was truly the coin-op capital of the world and that's where he grew up, he got to know some wonderful people. In fact, he did over 350 interviews in researching the industry for his books.

Through the years he crossed paths numerous times with the coin machine industry, from the baseball games sponsored by pinball factories to his days biking across the country as a teen when he spent time repairing games to make extra money. He even dabbled in operating with a 10-cent Mills War Eagle slot machine.

Dick once said that man was a game playing animal, contrary to the popular description as man as a tool making animal. "Where there's man, there's some kind of game," Dick explained. In his books, Dick takes us back to the first game designer from Greek Mythology who designed a labyrinth maze fit for a king. But Dick concluded that game playing could probably be traced back to man's beginnings. One story is of the ancient Mexicans that played a form of basketball, though they used a human head as the ball!

Dick authored numerous books on pinball, slot machines, trade stimulators, and aviation. In addition, his stint as a model airplane designer brought him recognition. He was proud of the fact that he built 129 of the model airplanes for the Kettering Collection in the Smithsonian.

His friends were stunned last year when he was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor, but he was optimistic. He was already deep into the next volume of his "Encyclopedia of Pinball" and desperately wanted to attend a coin-op collector trade show held in St. Charles, Ill., the weekend he died. Steve Kordek of Williams told us Dick had wanted to get an ambulance to take him to the show!

Dick is survived by his wife Helen, daughters Stacey McDonald and Megan Bueschel, sister Margaret, and eight nieces and nephews. In lieu of flowers, the family would like to see donations to the charity of your choice.

Dick's death is a great loss to his family as well as our industry. But his dream of seeing coin machine history come to life was partially fulfilled, and we're happy for that. I can just see those pinballs and flippers clicking to life wherever he is. Save us a game, Dick. ▲

> *"When the One Great Scorer comes to write against your name, he marks not that you won or lost, but how you played the game."*
>
> -- Grantland Rice (1880-1954)

ICE HEATS UP THE INDUSTRY

It was November, 1982. AMOA was in downtown Chicago. The industry was in a video game feeding frenzy. Operators were snapping up video games as fast as manufacturers could get them out the door. The first genuine really good video game kit, *Mr. Do!*, kept a promise made earlier that there could be good games in kit form.

Pac-Man had been introduced the year before, although *Battlezone* was named the unanimous hit of the show. While game factories were hell-bent on giving birth to the next *Donkey Kong*, *Asteroids*, *Space Invaders*, or *Centipede*, a small upstart company from Buffalo, N.Y., had other ideas.

Ralph Coppola and his partner Jack Willert had formed Innovative Concepts in Entertainment, a name that would appropriately describe their philosophy about developing coin-op games; sixteen years later, it still does. AMOA '82 was ICE's "coming out party."

What was so striking about *Chexx*—the company's first offering—was that it was completely out of sync with industry trends. Video was just plain hot, and pinball was trying to appeal to videoholics with games like *Caveman* by combining a video screen and pinball playfield.

VALERIE COGNEVICH

SUPER CHEXX

Ralph Coppola (c) touts the new features on *Super Chexx* at an early trade show.

> ***"What was so striking about* Chexx*—the company's first offering—was that it was completely out of sync with industry trends."***

ICE took a few booths at that first AMOA and showed *Chexx,* a game fashioned after the tabletop hockey games which had been popular and played in homes since the 1950s. Curious and skeptical showgoers stared at and then pounded on the distinctive Lexan dome. By the last day of the show, people could not get enough of this new phenomenon. A new competition had been born. *Chexx* would prove itself over the next 16 years to be "for real!"

By today's standards, perhaps *Chexx* would not be considered such a novelty. But let your mind wander back to the early '80s, a time when you could find a video in a phone booth! Then you'll understand how revolutionary the concept really was.

"At the time we had a whim, " said Coppola. "Now it seems more appropriate and it makes better copy if we call it a dream. When we look back, we know that our naivete prevailed over industry experience. Perhaps too often industry veterans allow themselves to become limited to industry trends.We didn't have that problem!"

Despite mechanical nightmares brought on by an entirely new company attempting to assemble over 200 different parts into a single game, *Chexx* won over even its staunchest skeptics.

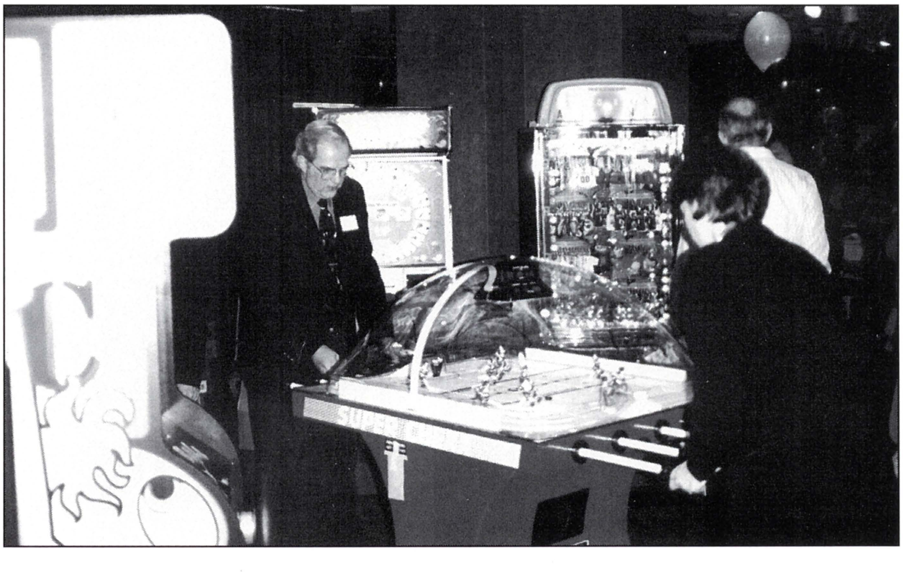
In 1983 *Chexx* was named "Novelty Game of the Year" and today ICE is still selling *Super Chexx* in steady numbers. Its designers say the game has established itself as a sport, much like air hockey or pool. More than 17,000 games have been sold worldwide—so far.

From a solid foundation of providing games that players wanted to play, ICE has grown into one of the premier manufacturers of games in the industry. Pretty significant considering the competition and the odds.

But as Coppola explains, "We suffered through second-game syndrome, like many others have, but we were fortunate to be able to hang on at the time. We were confident that if we positioned ourselves properly, the right break would come." It's obvious that they were right.

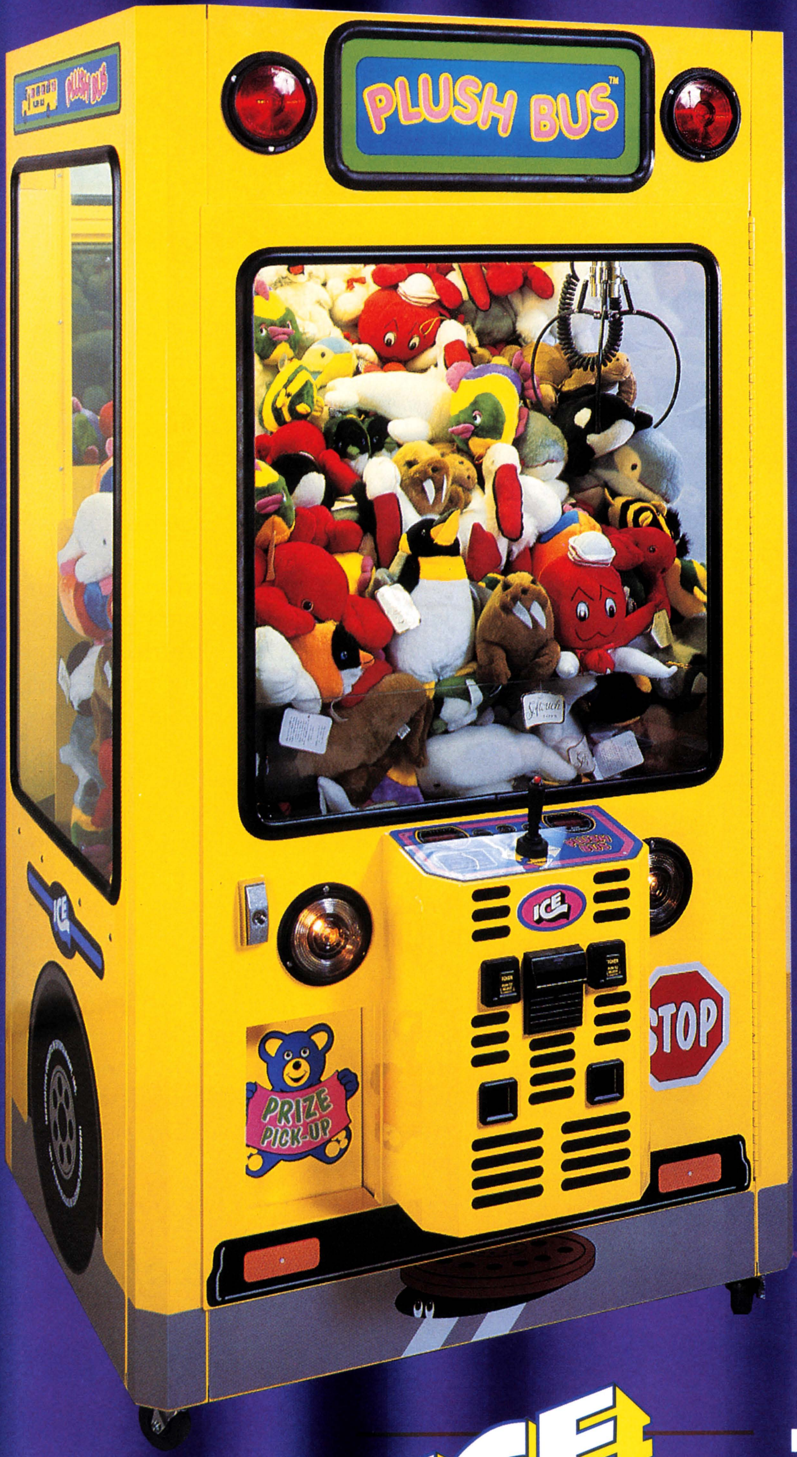
Early in the 1990s, ICE embarked on a series of games ranging from successful to mega hits with varied themes from kiddie and sports to fast coin and video. Here are some of those successes. *Putting Challenge* (patent licensed from G.L. Technology) sold over 3,400 units and helped take ICE to a new level. It also proved that a marriage between a good designer and a company with superior development, solid manufacturing, and aggressive sales could result in a hole-in-one for all parties, including the operator.

In 1983 *Chexx* was named "Novelty Game of the Year." Today *Super Chexx* still appeals to operators like Jim Stansfield, playing the game at a recent open house.



Get On Board The...

PLUSH BUS



- First and only full-metal, epoxy-powder coated cabinet.
- Crane assembly can be installed or removed in less than 30 seconds – no tools required.
- Crane mechanism uses only electronic switches.
- Rear prize door allows FULL-FRONT plush display.
- Available in joystick, joystick and buttons, or only buttons control panel.
- Prize counter.
- Extra capacity playfield for high-volume locations.
- 3-point door locking system for the ultimate in security.
- Micro-track harnessing.
- Low-voltage D.C. motors for safe and reliable use.
- Weather-proof.

CAN BE CUSTOMIZED TO MEET YOUR LOCATION'S NEEDS.

Dimensions: 42"W x 34"D x 78"H

ICE™

Innovative Concepts in Entertainment, Inc.
10123 Main Street • Clarence, N.Y. 14031
Phone: 716-759-0370 • Fax: 716-759-0390
E-Mail: play@icegame.com

Hungry Hungry Hippos **carved a solid niche in the pre-school category. Here Ralph Coppola shows a youngster the finer points of play.**

Mouse Attack **proved that a good video redemption when packaged properly can be enormously successful.**

Once it was apparent to everyone in coin-op that basketball games had seemingly run their course and had saturated the market, ICE introduced *Full Court Frenzy* (again, licensed from G.L. Technology) and began a whole new wave of basketball games with moving hoops. The imitators came out of the woodwork, but thousands of games later, ICE continues to innovate the coin-op basketball world with *Full Court Fever, Street Fever, Hoop Fever,* and *Mini-Dunxx* (for kids).

ICE's product line includes a diversity of themes with games for everyone. Undoubtedly, ICE has established a reputation as an industry leader in redemption. *Hungry Hungry Hippos* carved a solid niche in the pre-school category, while *Mouse Attack* proved that a good video redemption, when packaged properly by ICE, can be enormously successful.

Along the way, *Hitting Streak, Cobra Hunt, Dump the Ump,* and *Humpty Dumpty* offered FECs great variety and reliable performance. ICE had a keen sense of what these locations needed to be successful.

Iceball, according to Coppola, "was the culmination of one solid year of development with the intent of producing the best alley roller in a highly competitive market. The results have been overwhelming!"

Cyclone needs no further commentary. It has been the number one redemption game worldwide for over three years. ICE introduced a smaller version, *Cyclone Jr.* which is also a must-have for FECs.

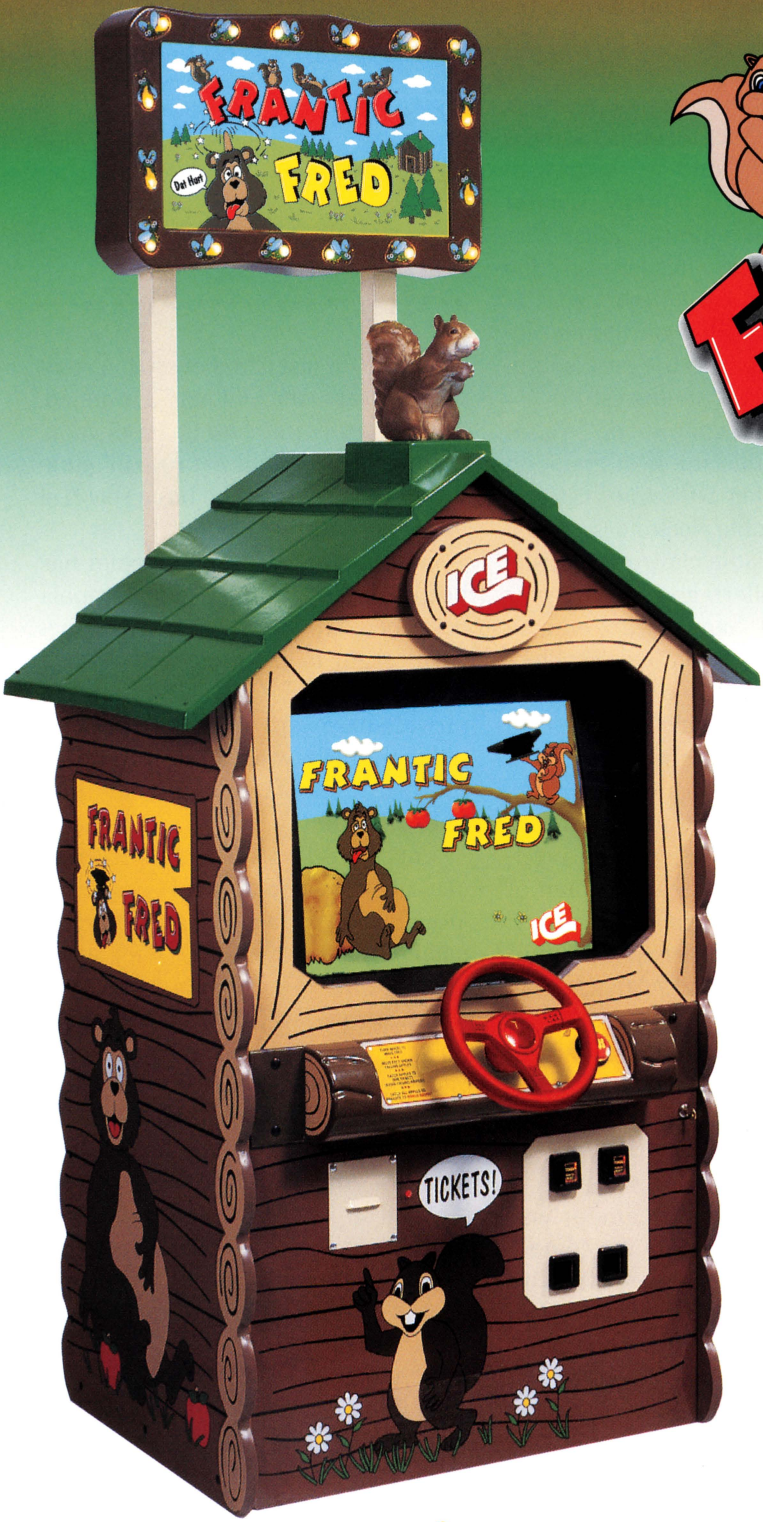
Slightly over a year ago, ICE began handling the Crompton (U.K.) coin pusher line for the United States. Coppola called it a "unique opportunity to become the exclusive North American agent for the finest pusher line in the world, not to mention working with the truly fine people at Crompton beginning with Gordon Crompton." At the same time Crompton took over ICE's line in the U.K. and sales at both ends increased dramatically, according to Coppola.

ICE innovated the coin-op basketball world with games like *Hoop Fever* (l) and *Mini-Dunxx* (for kids).

• •

"Perhaps too often industry veterans allow themselves to become limited to industry trends."

• STEER THE BEAR • EAT THE APPLES • WIN TICKETS



FRANTIC FRED™

The Latest In Interactive Video Redemption

NEW FROM ICE™

- First Video Redemption game to incorporate a steering wheel into simple, but challenging, gameplay for all ages!
- Unique, Eye Catching "CABIN"ET Design.
- Available for any world voltage and currency.
- Operator-adjustable ticket payout, with "MERCY" ticket option available.
- Optional "Video CYCLONE" Progressive Bonus at game end!

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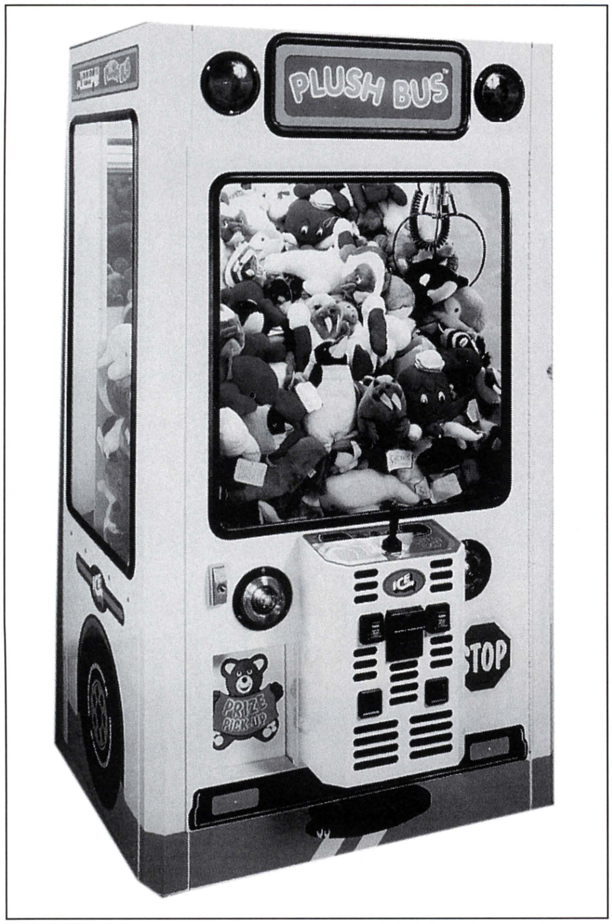


***Plush Bus* was the creation resulting from an intense 14-month project.**

Speaking of redemption, Coppola had this to say: "While we recognize changes in trends and in markets, we continue to dedicate a healthy percentage of our R&D to redemption. We're still very excited about it."

He continued, "Our latest games, *Bozo's Grand Prize* (licensed from Ed Pellegrini at P&P) and *Frantic Fred* are clear indications of the diverse nature of redemption. *Bozo* is the '98 version of a proven money maker, and *Frantic Fred* is possibly our neatest looking kids' game ever."

While Coppola admitted that a good portion of the company's capabilities were developed "out of necessity," he emphasized that the newest and perhaps most significant area of product growth was "no accident." Coppola explained, "Following the 1996 IAAPA show, we were approached by industry veteran Pete Walton with a concept of designing an all-metal crane. The end result is really now a successful page in our company's history, but here's the story. Our development team began an intense 14-month project of studying the crane business, surveying operators, analyzing all technical aspects of cranes, and working with our sister company, DiMar Mfg., to create the *Plush Bus.* The response has far exceeded even our own high expectations. Walton is our crane representative for the east, southeast, and the southwest."

Coppola continued, "We set out to build the best crane on the market with the best and most flexible electronics and the most reliable claw mechanism. Jack (Willert) and I have never been so happy with and so proud of our in-house development team as we have been with the great work on the cranes. We are making a real impact in the market."

ICE will continue to actively seek out opportunities and new products that will fit its steadfast plan of offering innovation to the industry. Coppola expressed his appreciation to Ed Pellegrini of P&P/Atlas for the chance to handle export sales on *Police Trainer*, a very successful video game gun kit, explaining that "it opened my eyes to video and has expanded ICE's horizons with potential video opportunities."

ICE started with a dream (or was it a whim?). The reality of the company's success has exceeded even the most optimistic expectations. Employment at ICE and sister company DiMar now exceeds 175. The company, which started in a basement office and moved into a giant 22,000-square-foot facility just eight years ago, now owns and occupies 125,000 square feet of office and manufacturing space.

"When we look back, we know that our naivete prevailed over industry experience."

Coppola attributes the growth and success to the people of ICE, beginning with his partner Jack Willert, who Coppola says is "not well known, but is responsible for just about everything that goes on inside the building." He added, "Jack oversees purchasing, production, and plays a more direct role in game development, where he has a real feel for games."

John Callahan, the R&D chief has been with ICE from day one. Coppola described him as, "the best electromechanical guy in the business."

Recently ICE added Ed Dluzen to provide hardware and software capabilities which were previously outsourced. Coppola calls this addition "monumental."

Coppola calls his sales people "truly in a category of their own." Greg Kania (domestic) and Gene Brogowski (international) have been with ICE for about seven years. Joe Coppola joined the staff two years ago and handles a combination of domestic, international, and special accounts. Marty Shelton handles western distribution.

"These guys," Coppola said, "are the most enthusiastic and responsible sales group in the industry. Their product knowledge, their belief in the company, and their honest approach to selling make them unique. We are really proud and appreciative to have them."

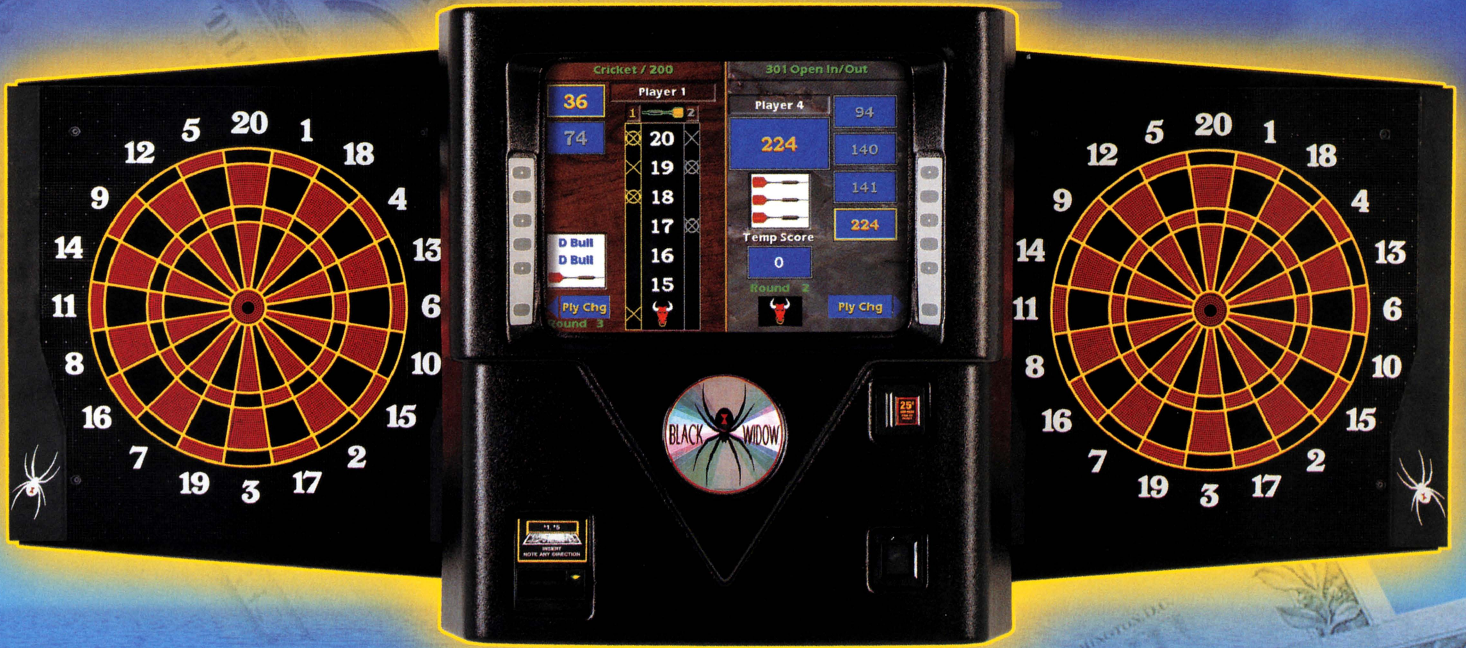
In the course of this interview, the concept of innovation was abundantly clear. But another theme rang through loud and clear. Coppola asked us to conclude the story with what he called the company mission: "Provide the most complete line of the highest quality product with the best service support available in coin-op." ▲

DOUBLE YOUR COIN DROP!

BLACK WIDOW™

DOUBLE YOUR PROFITS!

DEVOURS THE COMPETITION


Cricket / 200
Player 1
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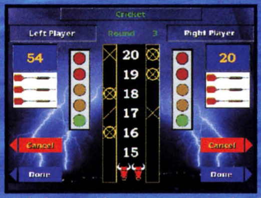
D Bull
D Bull
Ply Chg
Round 3
301 Open In/Out
Player 4
224
94
140
141
224
Temp Score
0
Round 2
Ply Chg
BLACK WIDOW
25¢
INSERT NOTE ANY DIRECTION

Two Dart Games

The Black Widow when played in the "split-screen" mode, is the full functional equivalent of two Galaxy games. Each side functions independently and offers all of the games and features of the Galaxy plus more.

Simultaneous Play (Head-to-Head) (Left vs. Right)

Traditional Games are more fun:


Cricket
Left Player
Round 3
Right Player
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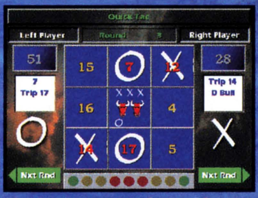
15
Cancel
Cancel
Done
Done

Cricket-pile on points before your opponent closes the number.


Quick Tac
Left Player
Round 1
Right Player
51
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Trip 17
Trip 14
D Bull
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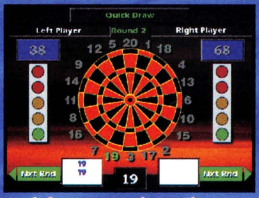
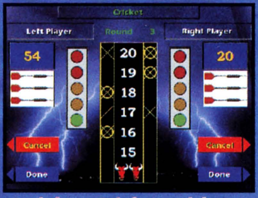
17
Nxt Rnd
Nxt Rnd

Tic-Tac-Darts-close the number before your opponent.

New Games for new fun:


Quick Draw
Left Player
Round 2
Right Player
38
68
19
Nxt Rnd
Nxt Rnd

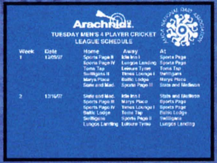
Quick Draw-when the randomly selected number pops up, be the first one to score and steal your opponent's darts.


Cricket
Left Player
Round 3
Right Player
54
20
20
19
18
17
16
15
Cancel
Cancel
Done
Done

Quicket-Cricket with a twist. Hit the magic number first and steal your opponent's darts.

Easier League Play

Enhanced two-way communications upload league matches, standings, and schedules. The games will be ready and waiting for the league players with no need for player cards. League fees are collected by the bill acceptor and reflected in the accounting on the screen.



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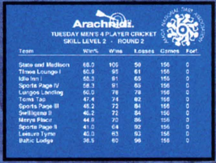
TUESDAY MEN'S 4 PLAYER CRICKET
LEAGUE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Home	Away	At
1	12/09/97	Sports Page II	Idle Inn I	Sports Page
		Sports Page IV	Lungos Landing	Sports Page
		Toms Tap	Leisure Tyme	Toms Tap
		Swilligans II	Times Lounge I	Swilligans
		Marys Place	Baltic Lodge	Marys Place
		State and Mad.	Sports Page III	State and Madison
2	12/16/97	State and Mad.	Idle Inn I	State and Madison
		Sports Page III	Marys Place	Sports Page
		Sports Page IV	Times Lounge I	Sports Page
		Baltic Lodge	Toms Tap	Baltic Lodge
		Swilligans	Sports Page II	Swilligans
		Lungos Landing	Leisure Tyme	Lungos Landing

League Schedules



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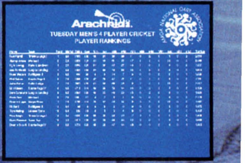
TUESDAY MEN'S 4 PLAYER CRICKET
SKILL LEVEL 2 · ROUND 2

Team	Win%	Wins	Losses	Games	Forf.
State and Madison	68.0	106	50	156	0
Times Lounge I	60.9	95	61	156	0
Idle Inn I	58.3	91	65	156	0
Sports Page IV	58.3	91	65	156	0
Lungos Landing	50.0	78	78	156	0
Toms Tap	47.4	74	82	156	0
Sports Page III	46.2	72	84	156	0
Swilligans II	46.2	72	84	156	0
Marys Place	44.9	70	86	156	0
Sports Page II	41.0	64	92	156	0
Leisure Tyme	40.4	63	93	156	0
Baltic Lodge	38.5	60	96	156	0

League Standings



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TUESDAY MEN'S 4 PLAYER CRICKET
PLAYER RANKINGS

Player Ranking

Enhanced Dual Communications

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5th Annual Family Fun Edition

Five years after the term "family entertainment center" became an integral part of coin-op language, we have no end of stories to tell about this continually developing segment of the amusement industry. Fun centers are everywhere, and we're not just talking about the big chains. Mom and pop facilities survive and thrive by constantly improving service, adding attractions, providing the personal touch, and giving back to their communities.

Small businessmen are not getting rich; they are making an honest living in a business that delivers an abundance of fun. As the perennially young American Bandstand originator Dick Clark once said, "Some people are blessed in that they create things that last forever. I contributed to the fun part of life."

Turn the page for an informative 44-page section chock-full of valuable fun center information.

What's inside:

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Debit Cards 89
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Token Talk 100
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Scoring Success 110
Redemption Report 116
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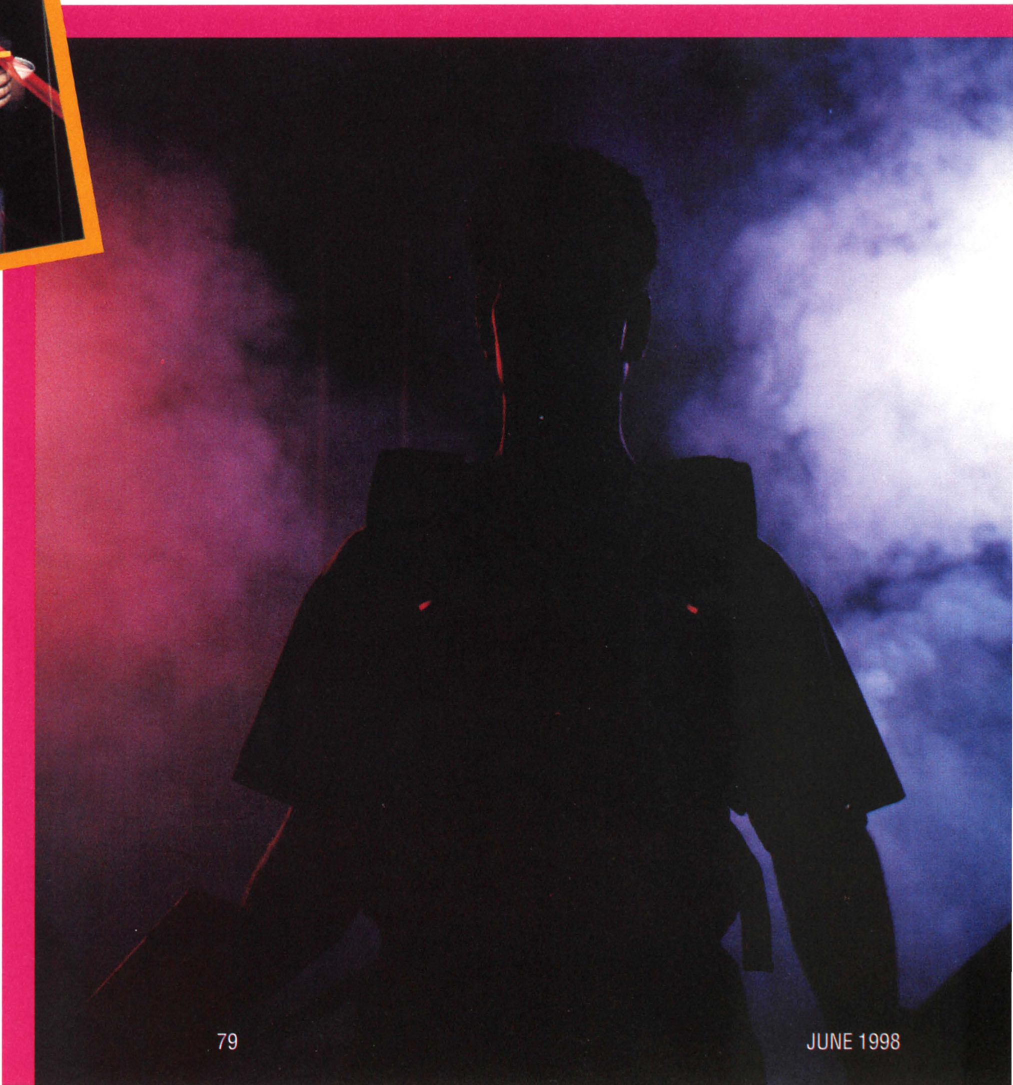
IAFEC Viewpoint 129
IAAPA Insight 132
Game Room 136
Coinman Interview 137

LASER TAG

Enter a laser tag facility. You're swept up in the atmosphere. But take a closer look at those donning colorful vests and wielding fancy phasers. Kids in the eight to 18-year-old range? Sure, that's a given. But believe it or not, you may just see an 85-year-old celebrating a birthday with a laser tag party!

Adventure for the masses

VALERIE COGNEVICH and BONNIE THEARD



Laser tag is not just for kids anymore. Roughly 15 percent of laser tag customers are business types, loosening the tie, shedding the sports coat, and becoming kids again if only for an hour. And this grown-up participation seems to be a growing phenomenon. Companies like Dow Chemical and General Motors have used laser tag as a team-building activity, according to Ascension Productions, maker of the Lazer Runner laser tag system housed in about 300 sites globally. Corporations are finding that getting together in an atmosphere probably as far removed from the office as you can get, is a successful way to build that team spirit and probably ease some hostilities. After all, how often can you "kill" your supervisor and laugh about it later?

Others have found ways to maximize their investment in laser tag by offering after-prom party packages, birthday parties, overnight lock-ins, and a number of other inventive ways to bring players into the facility. A laser tag system combined with a little imagination can be a winning combination both for the location and the customers.

With about 500 laser tag arenas dotting the country, and some 1,000 paintball facilities, there are plenty of ripe opportunities for laser tag in family entertainment centers. Only about 25 percent of family entertainment centers currently have laser tag arenas, according to Ascension, which added an encouraging statistic for the whole entertainment industry in the way of the Echo Boom—the proliferation of children born to Baby Boomers. Ascension maintains that the Echo Boom has created more kids in schools today than at any other time in our history. Plus the growth in the number of children between the ages of five and 15 is expected to dramatically increase over the next 10 years. These are potential customers not only for FECs in general, but laser tag systems within these locations.

Frequently asked questions about laser tag

Q: How much space is required to operate a laser tag center?
A: About 2,000 to 3,000 square feet of playing area. There should also be about 500 square feet for briefing and vesting players. But there are options for spaces as small as 1,000 square feet or larger than 5,000 square feet.

Q: What is the typical price charge for a game of laser tag?
A: The average price is $5. However, depending on variables such as size of the arena; duration of game; traffic flow; tourists; general demographics of area; age of players; etc. this price can vary anywhere from $3 to $10.

Q: What ages is laser tag suited to?
A: It can be enjoyed by all ages. There are vests and phasers built light weight and adjustable. There are also smaller versions for very small players. Some companies offer shorter game durations for those younger ones who don't have the stamina to play a full game.

From Ascension Productions' newsletter The Lazer Runner Blast

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Ascension Productions
Lazer Runner System
(403)496-9058

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Laser Extreme System
(403)440-3706

Laser Storm
Laser Storm System
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LaserTrek System
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LaserTron
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(716)836-0670

LaserStar Technologies
Solo System
(954)981-1208

Veqtor Laser Tag 'N Target
Veqtor Max System
(423)246-6927

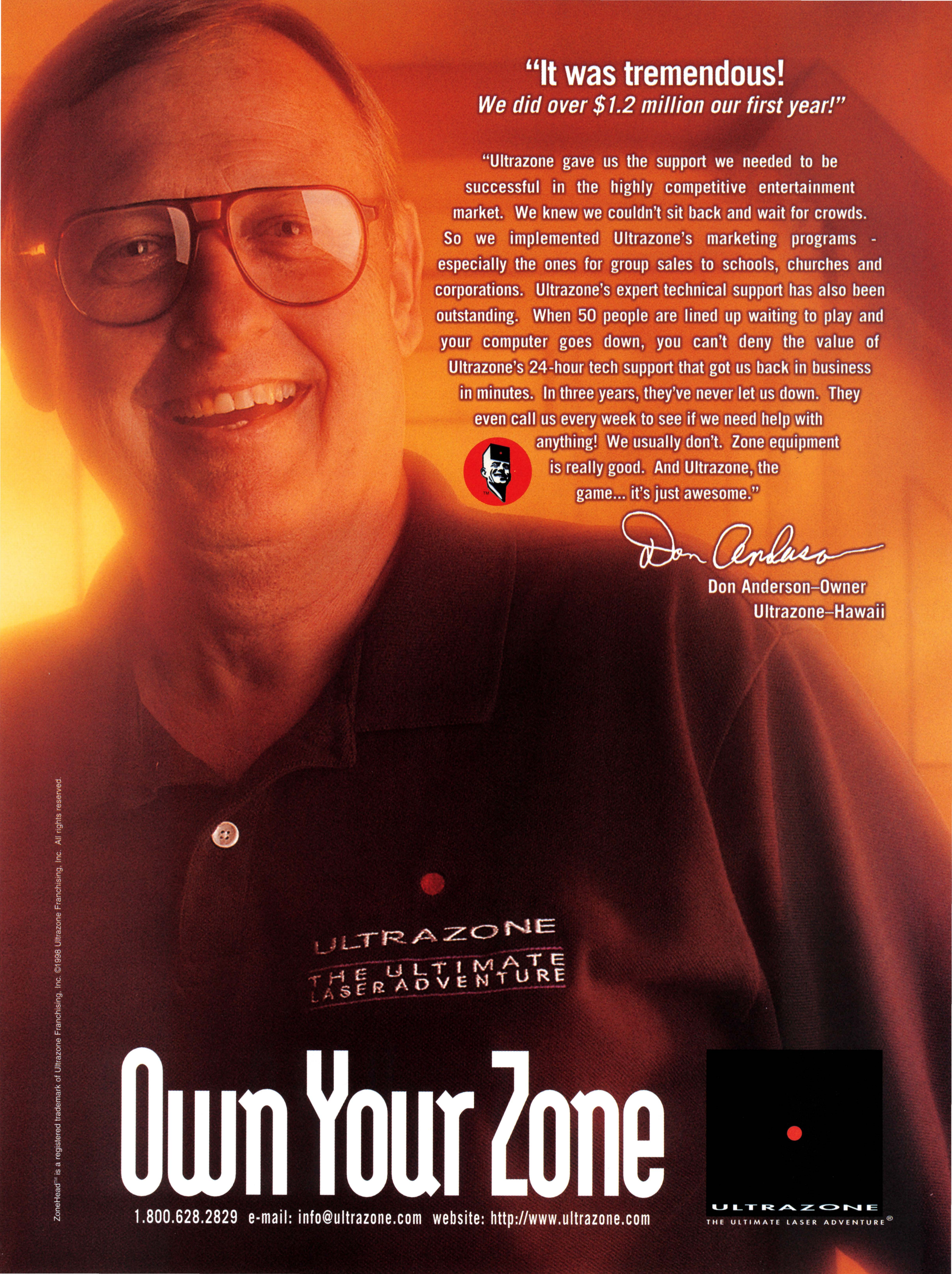
Ultrazone
Zone Laser Games
(702)734-3617

More good news on the laser tag front is the cost. There are so many options now that just about any FEC can find something to suit its needs. There's LaserStar Technologies' Solo Systems featuring cordless laser tag guns and no vests or headsets are required. Ascension Productions' Lazer Runner offers a radio frequency system that changes channels automatically when interference is detected, allowing smooth trouble-free play. The company also has a new customer site analysis package.

Ultrazone has the System-Z with a full line of laser tag equipment that offers a wide range of playing experiences from action-packed, fast-fire formats to birthday parties, complex games of strategy for experienced players, and leagues. Heads Up Technology has a range of systems from high-end, amusement park-scale units to more affordable products for large arcades. LaserStorm offers completely themed laser games and arenas, as well as new low prices on systems that include phasers, vests, energy pods, a computer system, and a numeric scoreboard.

Laser Extreme by Actual Reality offers 20 gun and pack systems in a turnkey package that includes an interactive arena with all the necessary components. LaserTron's system features rapid-fire action, guaranteed trade-in value, multidirectional vibrating sensors, and real-time radio data communication. Veqtor Laser Tag 'N Target has a state-of-the-art radio frequency-based system with a four-layer, surface-mounted module that operates with the Elite software.

But you're probably still wondering just how much we're talking about



"It was tremendous!
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"Ultrazone gave us the support we needed to be successful in the highly competitive entertainment market. We knew we couldn't sit back and wait for crowds. So we implemented Ultrazone's marketing programs - especially the ones for group sales to schools, churches and corporations. Ultrazone's expert technical support has also been outstanding. When 50 people are lined up waiting to play and your computer goes down, you can't deny the value of Ultrazone's 24-hour tech support that got us back in business in minutes. In three years, they've never let us down. They even call us every week to see if we need help with anything! We usually don't. Zone equipment is really good. And Ultrazone, the game... it's just awesome."

Don Anderson

**Don Anderson–Owner
Ultrazone–Hawaii**

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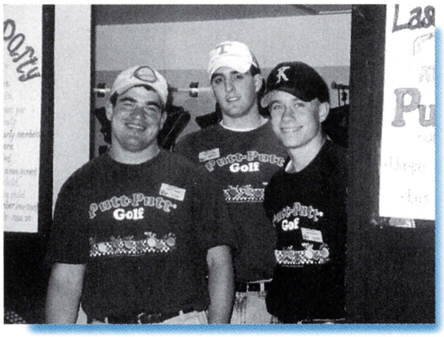
here—cost-wise. Ascension Productions said, "To date the biggest reason that entertainment center operators have not added laser tag has been that it has been too expensive for their budget or they were uncertain of the longevity of laser tag.

Well, there have been several changes and new developments in the laser tag industry. First, overall prices for laser tag systems have come down considerably in price. Prices today are affordable. With advances in technology and now a higher demand for laser tag, you can purchase turnkey laser tag systems for under $100,000. A few years ago you would have found yourself spending in excess of $400,000 for a similar setup."

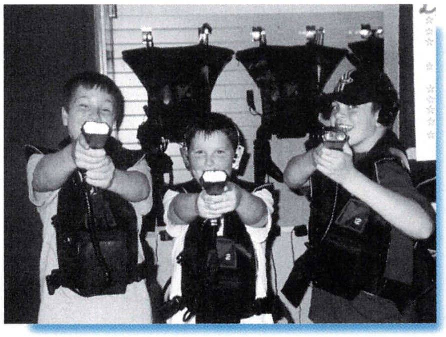
Now that the cost has come within many budgets, more FEC owners will be looking at laser tag as a vital addition to their centers. One thing is for sure, laser tag has withstood the test of time.

Read on to see how three locations have welcomed laser tag to their FECs and the success they've found.

Laser tag staff, (l-r): Kirk Hudson, Brad Rainey, and Joey Briggs take an after-party break before the next group arrives.



Ready for action, (l-r): Paul Palazzo, Steven Johnston, and Tyler Stevens from Bogalusa, La.



It's not just for children, as Sam Collett and Paulette Young agree.

Laser tag party animals: parents and their children suit up for fun at Putt-Putt Golf & Games in Mandeville, La.

Putt-Putt Golf & Games

Mandeville, La.

The needle on the excite-o-meter was at maximum level as a group of 14 boys and girls headed for the laser tag arena at this Putt-Putt Golf & Games on a recent Saturday afternoon.

A birthday party for mostly 11-year-olds was about to begin, complete with private party room and party captain, three 10-minute games of Laser Storm laser tag, pizza and soft drinks, group photo, laser tag shirt for the birthday child, and selection of the laser tag MVP.

This is one of the popular laser tag party packages available at the fun center that opened in August 1994 with two 18-hole miniature golf courses, five-station batting cages, 5,100-foot game room, redemption center, party rooms, and concessions on 2.3 acres.

In late 1995 the facility added the trampoline-based Spaceball and in late 1996 took the plunge into laser tag, starting first with an inflatable arena while the permanent 3,000-square-foot laser tag building was being constructed. Two laser tag party rooms and a control center are in the building, which leaves 2,000 square feet for laser tag play. Instead of large barriers on the playing field, this system features mazes made up of day-glo colored dividers suspended from the ceiling. If you bump into one it moves slightly and the only harm is that the opposing team members have a clue to your whereabouts.

When it came time for a new attraction, why choose laser tag? Facility owner/operator Bryan Horridge said, "We needed to offer something exciting for guests that they can't do at home." Horridge has a good track record with a little over a year of operation under his belt.

He describes the appeal of laser tag: "It's a giant video game and everyone can play at the same time—no waiting! People like the competition." Plus, laser tag is weather-proof.

Horridge explained, "It helps us out

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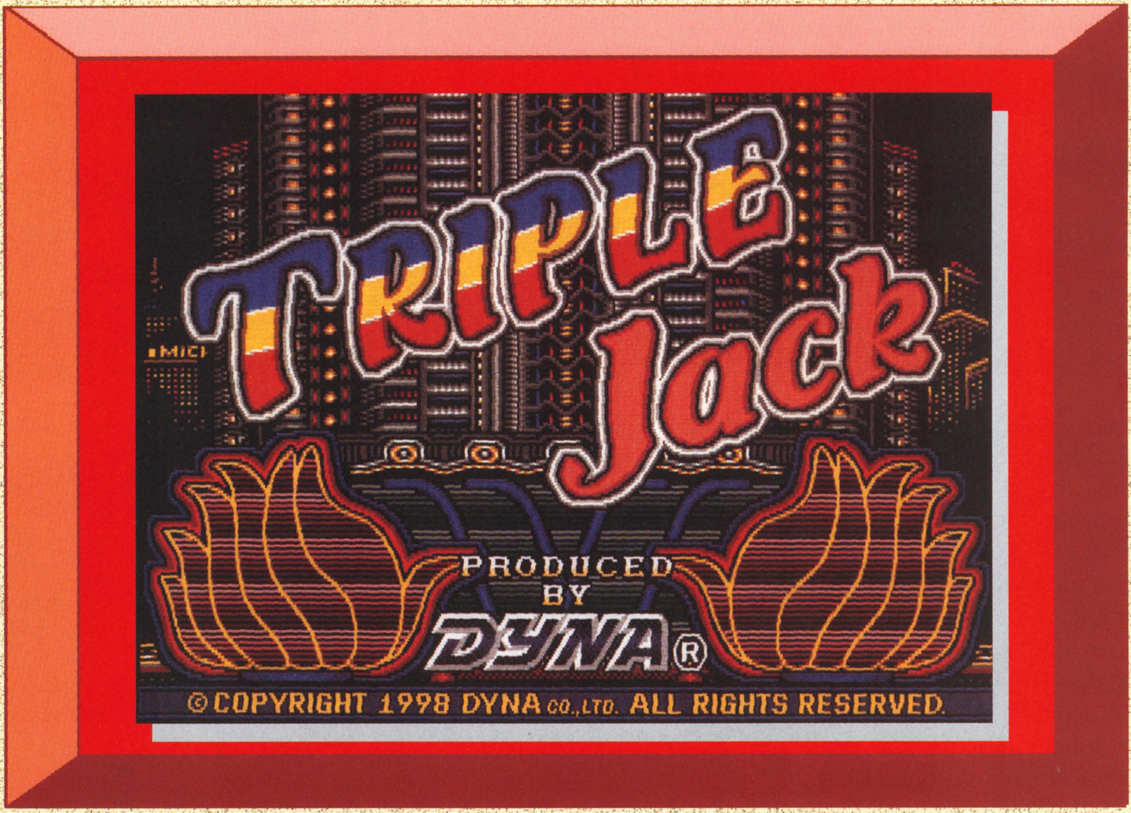

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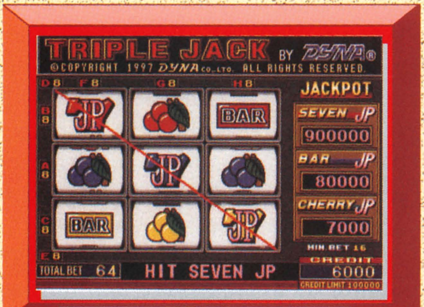
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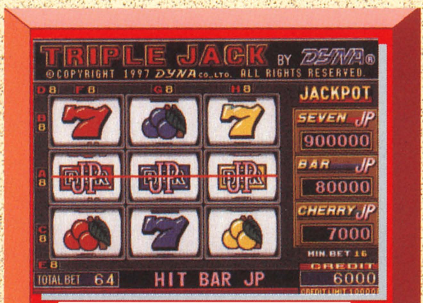
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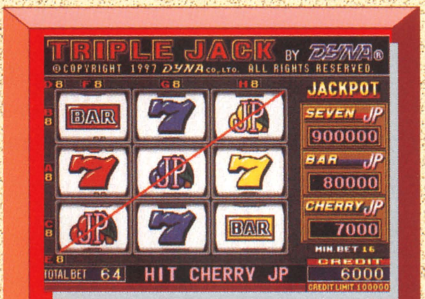
BAR JACKPOT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Virginia Tech students do karaoke in between laser tag sessions.

Summer camp was a hit with daily laser tag contests.

A laser tag regular gets into position for an adventure.

Anderson & Associates' CEO and staff during a team-building laser tag session at Fun Challenge.

big time in the winter, especially with the golf and batting cages. Baseball is over then, and with the weather here, you don't know how its going to be for outside activities. Laser tag is under cover. A lot of kids who have birthday parties in the winter don't want to do golf. This gives them an alternative.

"And in the middle of summer, when it's 98 degrees, some kids don't want to be outside. For us, golf is a draw for the 5- to 13-year-olds while laser tag has brought in more teenagers. And the adults love it; they can play with their children."

In the normal off-hours, laser tag is being utilized for after-prom parties that include laser tag and use of the game room until 3 a.m. In the summer there's a package that includes a trip to a Zephyrs Minor League AAA team baseball game with an overnight stay.

The surrounding community consists of mostly young families (and young parents) so it's no wonder that the next attraction under consideration is go-karts.

Thunderdome Race Park

Boyertown, Pa.

This two-year-old indoor FEC started with one go-kart track and a small number of games. Today Thunderdome covers 33,000 square feet with two go-kart tracks (the large one a bank track), 80 games in the game room (50/50 redemption and videos), two large indoor racing tracks for children from three years old up to adult, and a new laser tag system.

Robert Ziegler Jr., owner of this family-run business, said he added laser tag "to diversify and give people more to do." And it fits in perfectly with the family activities Thunderdome promotes. Ziegler commented, "We've even had 70-year-olds on the go-kart track."

Thunderdome added a Lazer Runner laser tag system from Ascension Productions six months ago. "It's really doing well for us," said Ziegler. "The real-time scoring is the feature we really like. We had an area of 2,200 square feet not being used. We decided to go with laser tag instead of another attraction because laser tag is more universally accepted."

Fun Challenge

Christiansburg, Va.

According to Chuck Jones, owner/operator of Fun Challenge, "To be able to have a lot of things families enjoy doing in one location is great. That's what they are looking for. Most families have an older child and a younger child and the older one does not want to be with the smaller kids." As for the parents, Fun Challenge is days away from adding go-kart tracks, which are eagerly awaited by fathers and youngsters in the community.

Fun Challenge occupies a 20,000-square-foot building that houses a 1,500-square-foot soft modular play structure, four birthday party rooms, large game area, 14-foot long redemption counter, food service area that seats 100 guests, toddler play area, parents' lounge, retail children's clothing store, and laser tag.

The 1,600-square-foot laser tag arena is Lazer Runner from Ascension Productions; it is designed as a maze and was added a few months after the center opened. "It's not a wide open space," said Jones, "that's where a

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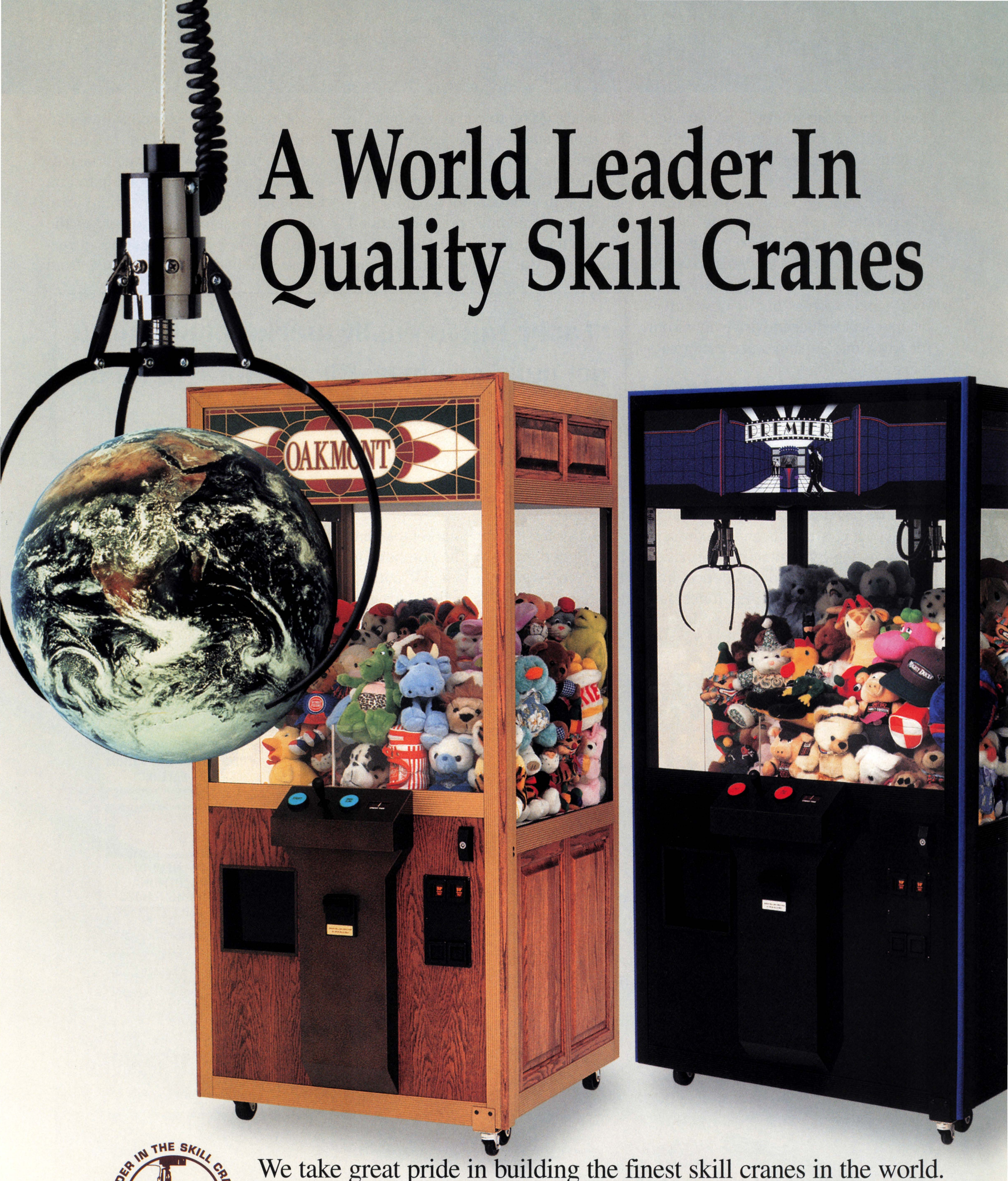

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smaller unit can still be fun. You can't play with as many people but when you are in there you don't know what to expect around the corner."

Fun Challenge is on a two-acre site close to three colleges: Virginia Tech, a community college, and a private college. Nearly 50,000 students are within 10 miles of the front door. It serves two small towns, but a new interchange will reduce the drive time from nearby Roanoke and make it more accessible to a larger city.

Said Jones, "The area where we are located has become an entertainment area, with a new bowling center across the street, like location-based entertainment. We had that notion from the very beginning."

Jones has capitalized on the proximity to college students and maximized his laser tag by contacting sororities and fraternities and residence hall monitors who plan outings. Jones stated, "If you are close to a college it doesn't necessarily mean that the students are going to come. You have to let them know where you are. You can't market to the whole college; you have to pick groups. They are looking for activities that do not include alcohol. There is so much pressure around the country for them to do things without alcohol being involved. Students are traveling five to seven miles to get to our place.

> **"Laser tag is easily marketable, but to get good group traffic you have to focus on target markets."**

"Laser tag is easily marketable, but to get good group traffic you have to focus on target markets. Of course, teenagers and middle school kids love it, but our college business is very good."

To reach those students Jones attended a interfraternal council meeting and gave a short presentation, plus offered a good rate for coming to Fun Challenge. He also went to the local club and business fair to spread the word about Fun Challenge's attractions. "We had a huge response from that," said Jones. "In September and October, which would normally be a slow time in our cyclical business, when students are caught up in what's happening on campus they are still looking for fun things to do."

Fun Challenge has been so successful on the college level that the business

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has gained preferred vendor status.

Fun Challenge also found laser tag to be an attractive activity for corporate outings that include team-building sessions. Other groups that utilize laser tag include engineering firms, hospital staff, churches, and civic groups.

Another creative use of laser tag involves sleepovers for a minimum of 20 kids. Jones has hosted 56 such sleepovers where the kids get the whole place to themselves, including pizza and later breakfast, plus time at the bowling center. It all goes along with getting the most out of your facility.

After-prom events represent an opportunity for laser tag. Jones said after-prom committees in his community build their own mazes out of large appliance-type boxes, paint them, and leave it to Fun Challenge to provide the black lights, smoke machine, music, and laser tag equipment.

Summer camp is yet another avenue for good use of laser tag. In addition, Fun Challenge has sponsored community laser tag tournaments to raise funds for local charities by getting businesses to participate.

Fun Challenge also hosted a meeting of the National Association for the Education of Young Children which drew 350 guests to the center. A babysitting service developed into a day care facility, staffed by day care professionals, on the second level of the main building. An outside playground was added for the youngsters.

Jones believes in adding supplements to your core attractions. He explained, "We try to do things to keep it fresh and interesting and stay involved in the community. I've been seeing more and more articles on marketing that stress reaching out to the community. That's something we do a lot because it helps us generate word-of-mouth advertising without coming out of pocket so much."

Regarding group marketing: "Once you get groups in the door they will have a good time and they will go out and say good things about us and that they got a fair deal; they got their money's worth.

"These groups have limited funds or they are non-profit. They need to know they are getting a good value because they do have other entertainment alternatives. If you don't give them a good value, somebody else will." ▲

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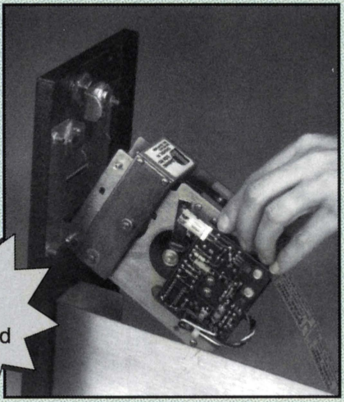

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Bonnie Theard

Debit Cards

Flash forward. It's the weekend. You enter a family fun center with your brood in tow. Everyone wants to do something different: go-karts, miniature golf, batting cages, game room, snack bar, bumper boats and cars, small rollercoaster. What's the easiest way to give everyone what they want? Purchase fun cards in predetermined value amounts and let the family members choose their favorite activities and snacks using the cards.

Depending on the sophistication of the card system, you could also register for a permanent fun club card that affords certain privileges (such as discounts). It's a win-win situation for the fun center and the customer. The center builds a customer base with names and addresses that can be used later for promotions and special events. Customers get more value when they come back to a place that's loaded with fun things to do. Club cards give customers a feeling of ownership; your fun center is "their place."

Left: Family Fun Center in St. Louis, Mo., recently converted to a debit card system.

Right: The miniature golf course at Family Fun Center.

HISTORY

According to Victoria Holmes, vice president of Intercard, a pre-paid card system company in St. Louis, Mo., the self-service copy industry pioneered the use of debit cards. Then they became popular on university campuses in the early '80s.

Intercard started marketing to the amusement industry in the late '80s. Says Holmes, "At that time they laughed at us. When I joined the company in '93 and we went to our first show they were still laughing at us. I'll never forget it. In the last two to three years the environment has changed; the perception of cash control and cash management is what drove the interest."

Holmes sees the marketing capabilities as one of the main justifications for the system. The market has "just exploded" in the last 18 to 24 months, she noted.

BENEFITS

Holmes feels the main benefits fall into two categories:

1) Cash control that provides reports on games and cash information that tightens up all those little holes, decreases theft and labor requirements, and allows flexibility in pricing structures; and 2) Marketing and promotions to do tremendous things with parties and group sales that cannot be done with traditional approaches.

The cash control aspect is what Holmes says "gets people to knock on our door," while the marketing and promotions aspect "sells the system with the opportunities it brings to the table." The types of promotions are almost unlimited.

Card systems are convenient for locations and guests, adaptable for all ages, eliminate coin and ticket jams, and save on labor costs related to coin counting and monitoring changers. In addition, they are tools for marketing and a boon for birthday or group party planning. And they have a higher perceived value than a paper coupon.

To children, a card is a sign of empowerment. "It's the first real card they have that does something," said Holmes. "It has a purpose other than to play pretend in their wallets."

ARE DEBIT CARDS FOR EVERYONE?

Some facilities with as few as 15 games use the system, says Holmes, depending on what the facility is trying to achieve. A small game room without an attendant would still benefit from a card system.

The type of customer is another determining factor because a card system lends itself well to repeat business. Locations with 10 to 15 pieces that are purely impulse plays would not be a good application.

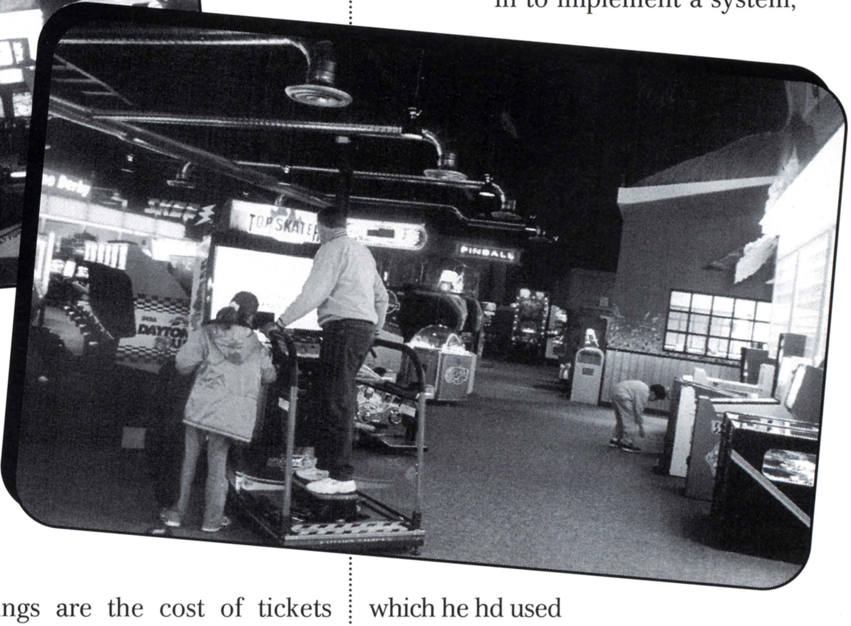
"Bigger facilities bring with them enhanced cash security needs," says Holmes. "If you have investors, they want accountability."

Added Dan Poertner, Intercard's northeastern region sales representative, "Definitely, location owners and operators are trying to control locations, whether they have one or many. Those with multiple locations want to be able to follow up from the home office on a daily basis. With a debit card system they can have an hourly or daily accountability."

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST? HOW DOES IT WORK?

Without knowing any specifics of a particular location, a rough estimate for a system to accommodate a location with 100 pieces of equipment would range from $80,000 to $100,000, says Poertner, which for video games includes card reader, custom door, power supply, interface cable, and network cable.

Inside the game room at Funmania in Old Bridge, N.J., which opened with a card system.



One card is all you need at Funmania.

For regular redemption games the system includes all of the above plus a redemption board. Coin roll down games will have all of the above plus a token hopper door that has a token dispenser in it. That door replaces the ticket door. For these games you insert the card and the machine dispenses tokens used in game play, but instead of ticket returns, the ticket value is put on the card. For redemption, the system buyer has a choice if he wants to have tickets coming out of the games.

Data collections and programming are done through the office computer. The system makes it possible to program happy hours, price changes, ticket values, or prize-point values in a configuration file stored in each game reader. Each reader knows the day of the week and the time of the day.

The computer sends configurations out to each reader; the readers themselves know everything they need to know so they do not have to be hooked up to the computer continuously. That computer can be used for other office work.

The system can tally redemption points for video games and redemption equipment, says Poertner. Among the savings are the cost of tickets and/or tokens, which can be considerable in a large center.

Cards come in 10 mil. or 30 mil. thicknesses. Cost depends on several factors including the number of colors being used and the quantity. As with any offset press operation, pricing is directly proportional to the complexity and the volume of the print order.

The amusement market gravitates to the 10 mil. card, says Holmes: "Because of the volume of that business the 10 mil. card is more cost-effective, and it's more forgiving (bendable)."

AT THE LOCATION LEVEL

No one knows more about fun center needs than general managers who are knee-deep in daily operations. Two such knowledgeable men are Tom Godfrey of Family Fun Center in St. Louis, Mo., and David Schwartz of Funmania in Old Bridge, N.J., who shared their experiences with pre-paid card systems.

Family Fun Center opened two years ago on a six-acre site. It features a 10,000-square-foot game room, 3,000-square-foot laser tag, bumper boats, miniature golf, and concessions. Go-karts are being added along with a soft modular play structure. A turnover of older homes in the area means more young families and children nearby.

The center ran the first year without a debit card Godfrey was brought in to implement a system, which he hd used at Fun Fore All in Pittsburgh, Pa.

For anyone looking to make the changeover Godfrey says, "First, look at how it affects your customers. If it works for them and it works for you, it's great. There are so many advantages. It's high-tech enough to get the job done, and it's a lot of fun for the customers.

"Kids take to everything, just look at

the Internet. Parents like the cards because they can keep their children on a budget and know what they are spending."

Godfrey wondered if tickets were "the sizzle in the bacon" but found that kids had no problem with the change. He estimates that it takes a facility 30 to 45 days to get used to the new system. At Family Fun Center a short video at the front door explains the system to new customers.

They are encouraged to sign up for the center's club card when they enter the park. "It allows us to attach their name, address, phone number, and birthday for our data base," explains Godfrey.

Debit cards are used for all the activities at Family Fun Center. The 10 mil. card is issued for normal customer use and a 30 mil. card is used as a special time card. Cards can be wiped clean and recycled.

For videos the player swipes his card through the reader, which deducts the cost of the game. In redemption games the machines hold the card while the customer plays. As teh game is played the number of tickets won are written onto the card as points that can later be redeemed (removed from the card) for prizes.

Godfrey says the location knows what games are being played and the age group of the players: "If I want to know my top 10 percent of 14-year-old players I can have it in a few seconds with the flick of a switch and get a printout. When you get your data base up to thousands you get a pretty good overview of what's going on."

What happens if a player loses his card? "We can bring up the card, close it out, and issue a new one with the previous credits put on the new card number," says Godfrey. "We're actually better than cash. If you lose cash you lose it. In our club you don't lose your points or cash credits."

Cards are easy to use, good for any-

PARTY AND GROUP OUTING PRIMER

How can you host 36 parties at your fun center on a Saturday? Birthday party and group outing specialist Beth Standlee says it's easy with a debit card system. Standlee honed her skills at the 50,000-square-foot Fun Fest in Addison, Texas, where she became sold on debit cards.

Standlee characterizes card systems as "a powerful selling tool." "Cards were accepted as payment all through the Fun Fest building," says Standlee. "A company would call and want to bring 30 folks over. We couldn't reserve space but we could say, 'How much do you want to spend on everyone?' then make up the number of cards needed with the value specified, and they could move all about the facility using the cards everywhere and have a good time. Is that service, or what?"

It's not only service, it's break-through service that's powerful, says Standlee, adding, "We don't have those options in the traditional avenues available.

"The card links the customer to the location. That's one of the major benefits to a card system. Our market is going to technology. With the way we can do business with card systems, the ease of operation, it's a no-brainer."

Standlee points to Las Vegas with its frequent player cards. "These are the masters of entertainment," she says. "They have been paying attention to their customer base."

She poses these questions: "What's the scope of your business today? What do you want it to be?"

"This industry usually lets the business happen to them," says Standlee. "We're not used to selling. Debit cards can be an awesome revenue tool with their convenience and tracking capability."

And they are a negotiation tool for group sales. She explains: Most of the time fun centers use tokens as a giveaway and don't make money on them. Take a birthday party package charging say $8 for the basics. With a card system you can upgrade the package with a $5 game card for $3. Parents instantly see a 40 percent value. This is doable with a card system. This is a way to upgrade or funsize your package and add value.

Here's another situation: A group wants a package plan with several activities but thinks the total price is too high. There is a tendency to start cutting down on the price of one or more of the attractions. With a debit card system you can adjust the value of the card that goes with the package without lowering the cost of the attractions.

Standlee's expertise led to an association with Intercard that included her writing the company's sales and marketing strategies manual and going onsite for two days of training with each installation. In addition, she is national sales director for Schumacher & Co. which manages all Don Carter bowling centers. ▲

Beth Standlee in the game room at Don Carter's All Star Lanes in Kenner, La.

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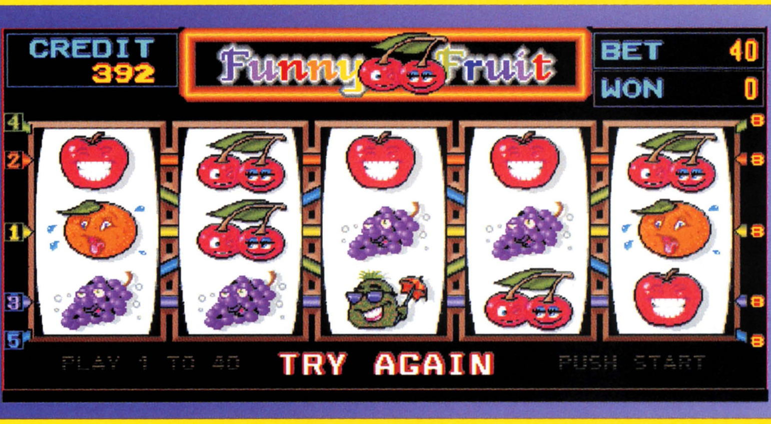
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Funny Fruit
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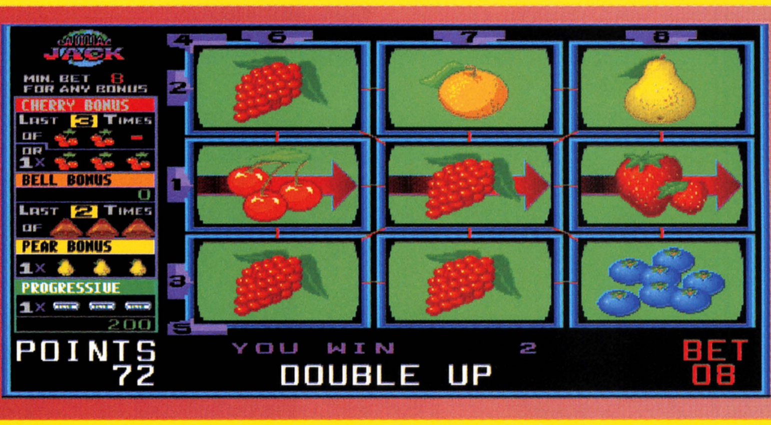
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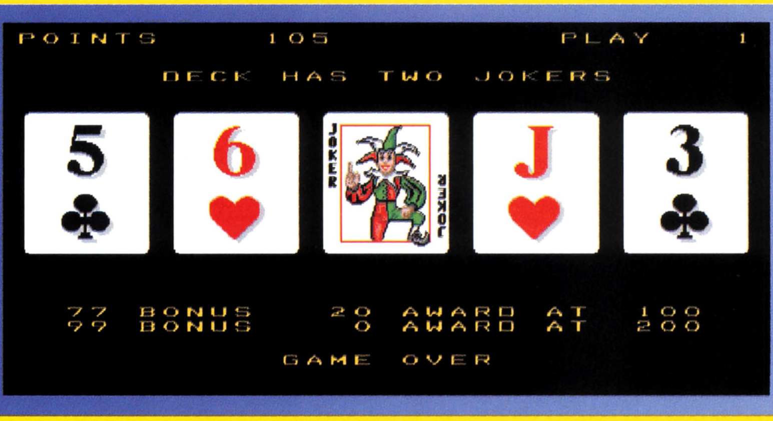
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thing in the park, and give customers a reason to return. Cards replace wristbands for special time play and make birthday party and group outings run smoothly.

Over at Funmania, Schwartz has enjoyed similar success with a debit card system. He considers it the "guest-friendly approach."

Funmania is a brand-new FEC that opened Feb. 20 with a debit card system in place. The center is an addition to an existing golf driving range (Legends) and pro shop situated on 20 acres. Funmania includes a 20,000-square-foot building housing 150 games (half redemption, half video, plus air hockey), extensive food service menu, and a well-landscaped half-acre miniature golf course with streams, water traps, and sand traps.

"Nowadays golf is for all ages," says Schwartz. "We definitely increased our younger age customers and family business with the addition of Funmania. It's very synergistic with the crossover from the driving range to Funmania and back."

Schwartz started with a card system right out of the gate. "We've had such success with the cards that we are now in the process of installing more card readers in the golf ball dispensers on the driving range so the whole facility will be on the debit card system.

"One card is all you need. This is the easiest method instead of wristbands, tickets, and different size tokens. Some places have up to six different forms of admission. We wanted to make it less confusing."

The response has been excellent, says Schwartz: "We thought kids would miss the tickets but no one has said, 'How come we can't have tickets?' It helps that we never had the tickets."

Schwartz explains that the card reader for the system fits in the standard coin doors. If there is a standard over/under coin door, the over door will have the card reader. Redemption games hold the card like at Family Fun Center. A player's score is tallied and transferred to the reader in the form of points.

"You actually see the points accumulating," says Schwartz. "Kids like that; they get psyched because they see exactly what they have. That's an exciting point we see now that we are into operations. Kids feel like they have a real credit card. Adults love it. We were sure they (adults) would like it. They don't want to lug tickets and tokens around."

More information on debit card systems is available from Intercard Inc., (800)732-3770 or (314)275-8066, and EXP Inc., (813)841-6630. ▲

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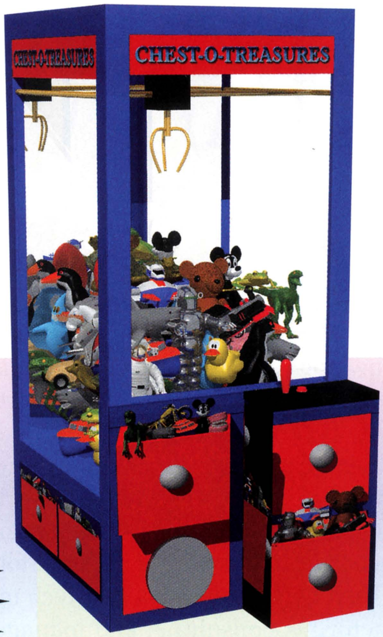

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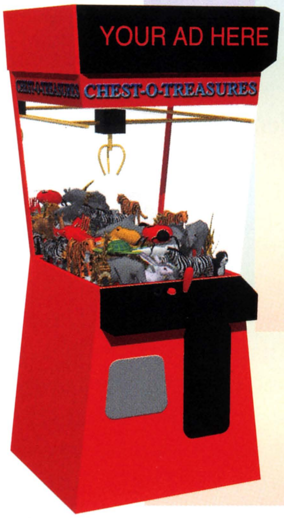

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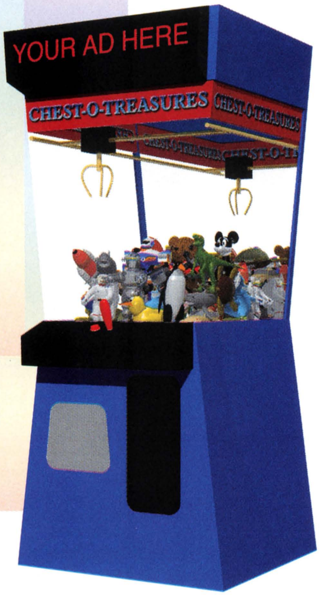

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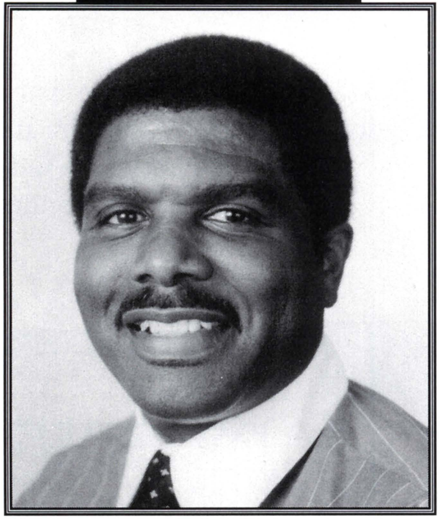

REGGIE MOULTRIE

Want to give yourself the best chance to succeed? Learn what key factors influence the destiny of your facility. Reggie Moultrie of Dave & Buster's shares his considerable experience.

We didn't plan to do such a lengthy interview with Reggie Moultrie of Dave & Buster's, but once he started talking we were fascinated with his knowledge of the industry and couldn't seem to let him go! He naturally talks about Dave & Buster's, but his words could easily apply to any location looking to be around for awhile.

Reggie got into the coin machine industry during his school days working part-time at Six Flags where he worked in the games department. After graduating, he was offered a full-time position as assistant manager of games and attractions. He was with Six Flags a total of 13 years.

Next he was hired by Vari-Tech in Grand Rapids, Mich., an amusement manufacturing, consulting, and management service company. He was hired by Mark Kane, who Reggie worked with at Six Flags. Mark was special projects manager working with Disney. When Disney expressed a desire to expand the project, Mark thought of Reggie and soon hired him. In addition to working with Disney, Reggie was assigned to a project at The Shops on Ocean One in Atlantic City. He explained that it's a huge mall shaped like a riverboat. He stayed at Vari-Tech for nearly seven years.

Skee-Ball bought Vari-Tech and Reggie went too and was named vice president of sales for Skee-Ball. Now he's vice president of games and merchandising for Dave & Buster's. From operating and managing to manufacturing and consulting, Reggie has been in about all phases of the industry.

PLAY METER: What were some of the most memorable experiences during your industry career?

REGGIE: As vice president of Skee-Ball I traveled around the world. When new territories opened, it was my job to develop them. I did that in South America, Mexico, and the Middle East. While doing that I also handled our domestic national accounts and worked with half the U.S. distributors. Needless to say, I had a fairly large responsibility.

PLAY METER: How did you meet Dave Corriveau and Buster Corley?

REGGIE: During my days at Skee-Ball I was doing business with Dave. I got to know him pretty well and we became friends. We had dinner one night during a show and I happened to mention that I was thinking of opening my own business. He wanted to know why I was thinking about it. I told him that I'd done about everything I could do and was ready to move on. He said he was always looking for good people and asked me if I'd want to work for Dave & Buster's. He told me to talk to my wife about moving to Dallas. Well, the rest is history; I decided to do it..

I moved to Dallas and was named director of amusements. I had the responsibility of purchasing games, making sure they were laid out properly, and that they were rotated properly.

PLAY METER: I guess the obvious question would be, just how do you make sure games are laid out properly?

REGGIE: 1. Start with a game that's popular placed in the front of the location

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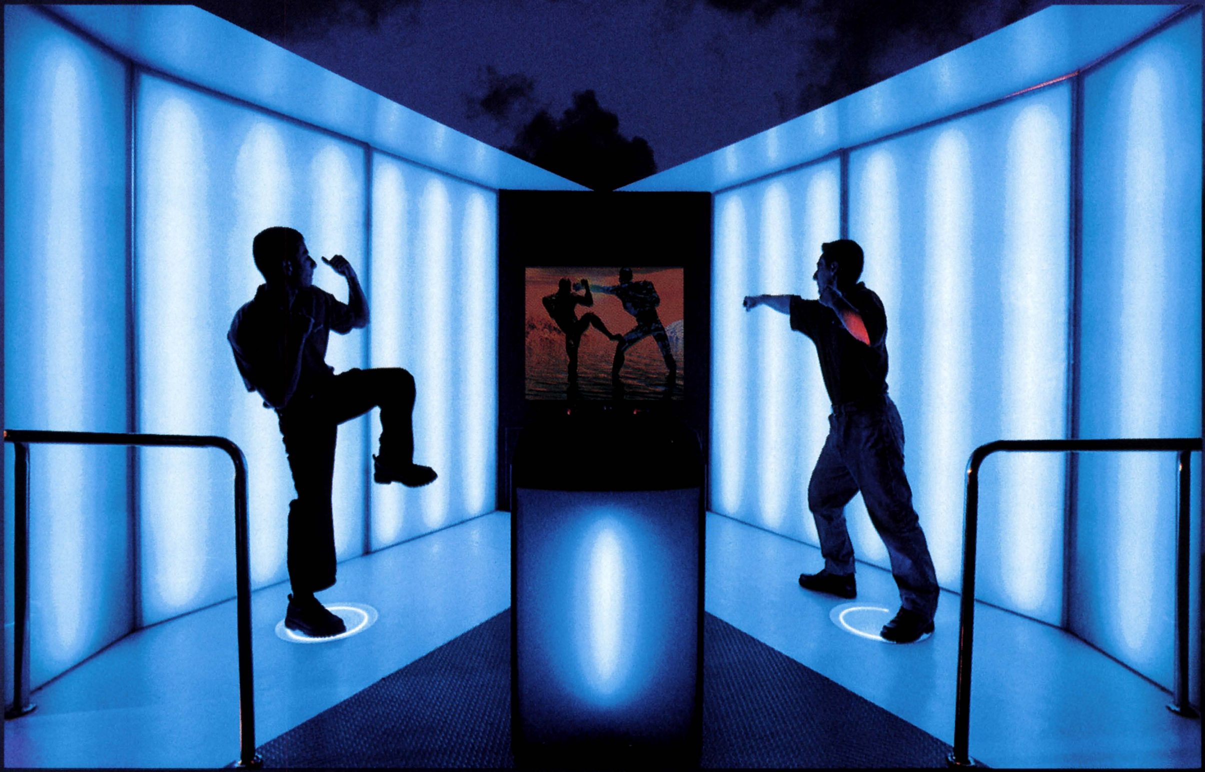

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to greet guests as they come in door.

2. Group like games together. When you have players with a particular interest they tend to stay in that area with the games they are attracted to.

3. Make sure you have clear walkways to your games. It may sound simple but you'd be surprised how many times I've seen it nearly impossible to walk through a location. I'd recommend that you make sure there's a minimum of six feet of walkway.

4. Leave a clear view so guests can see what you have to offer. Islands are fine and they break up the monotony of rows of games, but use low profile games so they are less obstructive.

5. Areas should be lit properly. Games that require highlighting should have extra light. Those that have their own light can be placed in darker areas. There are a multitude of choices from neon which is big now to spot can lighting. The first consideration, no matter what you choose, is lighting should not be offensive. You don't want your guests walking into a blaze of lights. Lighting should be pointed straight down so it's not shining in your guests' eyes. Your lighting will set the tone. If your clientele is largely children, you want it bright and festive. If you serve adults, it should be a little more subdued. Lighting gives your customers an environment.

PLAY METER: What are some other important factors that should be considered before opening an FEC?

REGGIE: The single most important thing is to know who your guests will be. If you as the owner haven't quite figured it out, think of how difficult it will be for your customers to figure out if this is the proper place they should be going for their entertainment!

PLAY METER: We've heard all the letters describing facilities like FEC, CEC, LBE, etc. How would you describe Dave & Buster's?

> **" I'd have to say that after defining your customers, it is vital to have good quality people. You can't skimp here. You want people who plan their work and work their plan."**

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REGGIE: We define ourselves as a fine dining and entertainment facility!

PLAY METER: There have been quite a few facilities that have closed. Do you think there are common reasons?

REGGIE: I mentioned this before but it's probably one of the major reasons facilities close their doors. They never clearly defined who their clientele was. If someone sets out with a clear understanding of who they are going to want to attract and then everything else is geared toward that group, they have given themselves the best chance for success. That's it in a nutshell. If you are going to serve alcohol and beer you don't spend money on a playport or a merry-go-round. Define your clientele, and then your purchasing, type of food, various components within your location, etc., should be as clearly defined.

> **"The first consideration, no matter what you choose, is lighting should not be offensive."**

PLAY METER: What are other key factors needed for a successful place?

REGGIE: I'd have to say that after defining your customers, it is vital to have good quality people. You can't skimp here. You want people who plan their work and work their plan. This is something that impressed me most about Dave & Buster's. The people who work there, from Dave and Buster and the vice presidents to the line managers, buy into the concept of what Dave & Buster's is all about and are committed to the entertainment value the company wants to present. In all my years I've never seen that type of commitment to excellence. But it all starts with Dave and Buster. They are there working just as hard or harder than anyone else. They are the inspiration.

PLAY METER: Is it important for the owner to be that involved?

REGGIE: It can't be said enough. Make sure as an owner you are involved on a day-to-day basis. As big and successful as Dave & Buster's is, Dave and Buster are still right there. They haven't handed off the responsibility.

PLAY METER: What is your view of the family entertainment industry in general?

REGGIE: There has definitely been a shake-out. You're finding that smaller operators are having a difficult time competing with the larger LBEs like Disney, GameWorks, etc. I see the locations getting larger and more dynamic, trying to be a catch-all to satisfy a large market. It's a good plan but the question is: will it work? Too many will raid quality and the presentation. And it's bad if there are too many too soon. We've seen good concepts but there's something that signals the end. One thing is not letting the management grow. It's one thing to commit to numbers but it's another to commit to people.

At Dave & Buster's we make sure that everyone presented to our customers are geared to do whatever is in the guests' best interest. If you treat your staff with respect, train them well, work with them, and let them know what you expect, you'll be rewarded with dedicated people. I guess the number one lesson is that the customer is always right! And your staff knows that they are expected to make each guest's visit a pleasure.

Here's an example of what I mean. A guest may have been saving tickets for a certain prize. He comes back, finally with enough tickets for that item; it's not there. We would do whatever we could to either get him that item he wanted or make him a great deal on something else. Either way, that customer will walk away with a good deal. But more importantly, that customer will walk away knowing that Dave & Buster's cared that he walked away happy.

I have to add one more vital element to any successful location—cleanliness. I can't emphasize enough how important this is and how often it's not a priority in some FECs I've seen.

PLAY METER: Do you have some helpful advice about buying equipment?

REGGIE: The manufacturers are offering a good variety of games. But you have to be extremely careful about what you put in your location. If you are inundated with gun games, but your customers have a racing game mentality, well, it's obvious you have the wrong games. It goes back to having your hand on the pulse of the market you serve. It comes with experience. Even with our multiple locations, we don't simply buy multiples of games. Our purchasing is a science. We test games thoroughly. It's not, "We like, we buy it." It's more: "The guests like it, therefore we buy it."

PLAY METER: Do you work closely with distributors?

REGGIE: Most definitely. You have to utilize the experts—distribution. They are invaluable to us from a supply standpoint and for product feedback. They work with manufacturers and get the inside word on how a product is doing. I confer with them all the time.

PLAY METER: Tell me about the *Old Chicago Shoot-Out* game.

REGGIE: Dave & Buster's is always looking for something new and different. This time we have taken an old concept—a game originally by Taylor Engineering—and customized it for Dave & Buster's. It's an old speakeasy Chicago shoot-out theme. We thought it was perfect for our clientele. Remember when I talked about knowing who your customers are? This is quite the presentation. ▲

TOKEN TALK

MICHAEL HOFFMAN

Hoffman & Hoffman

Tokens are for everyone

Michael Hoffman discussing tokens with a customer at a recent trade show.

We make a lot of tokens and I see a continued increase in demand. I thought that with the advent of debit cards, there was a possibility we'd see a downturn in tokens, but that doesn't seem to be happening. Of course, I have a wait and see attitude. Some companies including those that offer cards, software, and complete turnkey services are interested in tokens. I was pleased to hear that, although I was a bit surprised. These companies are looking to use both things. I really don't think cards will appeal to kids; they like to feel those tokens in their hands.

I've seen several companies using both tokens and cards in their FECs. For instance, they might use tokens for payouts and cards for play. I am intrigued at the integrations by sophisticated industry developers and leaders of coins, tokens, and cards. No one said you could only choose one.

Here is my list of advantages of using tokens:

1. The main one is that you can change the price of play more easily than you can with quarters. It's difficult to change the value of price per play when you are only using quarters.

2. You can be innovative with tokens for promotions. One popular way is to offer children so many tokens for good grades when report cards come out. Or you can give out more tokens when it's slow. Tokens are very good for use in some creative promotions.

3. Use them as advertising. Put your name on your tokens, and because people don't throw tokens away, they'll see your name when they see those tokens. If they want to get out of the house to play games, they'll remember you and probably go to your place to play.

4. When you sell a token, you've make the sale whether it's used or not. We call it walk away profits. Your customers leave with tokens in their pockets, but the FEC owner has already made a profit. Both Hoffman & Hoffman and the arcade owner are in the same business of selling tokens. However, the arcade owner makes more on his sale than I do. If he pays about five cents for a token and sells them for a quarter, he's made a 20-cent profit.

5. Security is another big advantage to using tokens. You never have to worry about people breaking in to steal tokens. You don't have to risk being injured by someone breaking in. Tokens are not perceived as something with a cash value.

6. Because tokens are not perceived as having the same cash value as a quarter, your customers spend them more freely than they do quarters.

7. Using tokens frees up your cash for other things. For example, say you had 10,000 quarters in your inventory for, say, changers. That's $2,500 you have tied up. If you take that money, use $500 of it to buy tokens, you've got $2,000 to use for other projects or concerns.

I cannot think of one location that would not do well with tokens. However, companies that operate video poker and vending usually are not good candidates for tokens.

Michael Hoffman offers a popular dinosaur coin, great for redemption prizes.

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Even a route owner could use tokens in some innovative ways. He could precount a bag of 1,000 tokens and sell that bag to a location. The location could implement any kind of promotion they could think of using these prepaid tokens and the route owner has already made his profit.

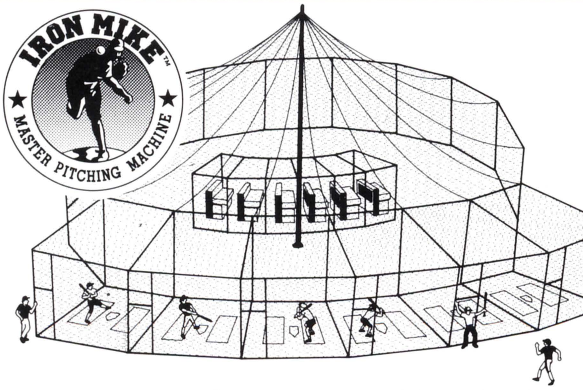
Like I mentioned before, we are getting a lot of requests for tokens. Cards are making inroads, but now I see the beginning of cards and tokens sharing the spotlight. Locations that have birthday parties could use tokens for the kids at the party who I'm sure would rather have a handful of tokens than a card. Smaller operations are sticking with tokens.

Tokens are not as expensive as some may think. Plus to have a custom die made is under $200 and it can be used whenever you order more tokens. We even have some dies and images that our customers can use at no change. There are also tokens that can be used as prize merchandise. They are collector's items.

The FEC industry is here to stay. It's an outgrowth of arcades. As arcades began getting more sophisticated there was more appeal to the family. They could all go to an FEC and find plenty of games for kids, teenagers, and adults, not to mention interactive games and virtual reality. I see FECs going in several directions: themed and more expensive and expansive. We're seeing the themed FECs now with chains in various cities sporting the same concept. Then there are the elaborate, expensive, and big places with, hopefully, the big returns!

With the sophistication of computers and everyone having them in their homes, FECs have a challenge to offer the clients more than they can find in arcades or their homes. The sophistication of the machines is apparent now and it'll only get better. At the last trade show I saw some amazing simulators and some driving games that were impressive. But along with the sophistication comes soaring prices. FECs must have good marketing plans and be able to put their plans into action. Those who have a plan and stick to it will find success.

The plastic card won't replace the token for a long time and maybe not ever. We may see U.S. coin and currency eliminated before we'll see tokens eliminated. As we get more e-cash, digital cash, and as more terminals take smart cards, there will be less demand for coins and currency. At some point in the future consumers will be offered huge discounts to use cards, and currency just won't be used anymore. The quarters will be long gone but tokens will still be there. ▲



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TOKEN TALK

VIRGIL VANCE

Van Brook of Lexington

Think quality above all else

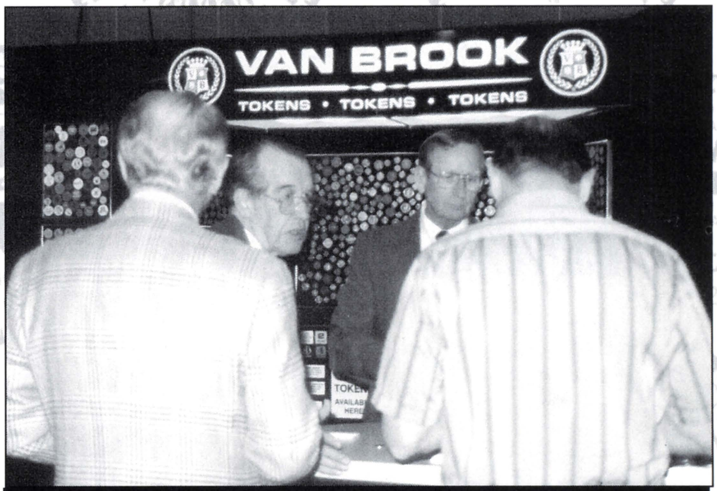
FECs in general are moving onward and upward. They're larger and more lavish. We're seeing consolidation which means fewer locations that are much larger centers. There are some major investors who have gone all out with miniature golf, game rooms, batting cages, and even more attractions. It's a good concept and it can be successful. But it can also be overdone. You've seen the incredible price of games. Anyone looking to open one of these locations must have the financial backing and the know how. The key is location, location, location and promotion, promotion, promotion. They would be well advised to have cautious optimism before investing. Many will be looking to invest in FECs which seem to be the upcoming thing.

If you are wealthy you may decide that you want to buy your own games to keep 100 percent of the revenue. You believe that you'll make a lot more money that way. But it's not usually real life. You can buy some games but you can get experienced operators to supply a lot of games. The new games are always touted as winners but we know they all aren't. Let's just say that being wealthy doesn't give you a great deal more knowledge. This market is fickle. I encourage you to go with an operator.

Redemption is a totally separate subject. I think it's seen its glory days. There are enough teddy bears and novelties on kids' shelves that redemption will cease to have the appeal it's had. If someone is going into redemption they must have quality merchandise and stay away from trash. If you have cheap merchandise, you won't make it. Quality always works, in this industry as well as others.

Quality comes first and that includes the right location, quality equipment, quality merchandise, and probably the most important, quality people. You can't simply staff your place with warm bodies; you need people with a good attitude. It's worth paying extra for.

I have a friend in California who wrote a thesis on why people play slot machines. The essence was that they are not playing solely for the money, but for the admiration of those watching. If everyone took the attitude that there's an audience when you are projecting your image, you may want to do things a bit differently. I think of Bonanza steakhouses a few years ago. They left all the quality in the hands of people who didn't know what they were doing. The quality wasn't there and soon neither were the customers. Now look at Outback steakhouse. They focus on quality. It's an example of keeping quality high and your business will boom.



Virgil Vance (c) discusses tokens with customers at a trade show.

OK, I've talked about the industry in general and now I'm coming to the place tokens have in the industry. I tell everyone, whether a mom and pop location or the biggest places around, that tokens can be a big asset to them. They don't have to worry about changing acceptors since the traditional quarter acceptor can be adapted to tokens of various sizes. Some even want their machines to take either—after all, you don't want to lose a sale.

There are two major benefits of using tokens—promotions and not having cash on hand. Many FEC owners simply don't want cash in their machines or in their changers. They've told me that they've had the entire changer stolen. Unfortunately, many remember the early days of video games when there were token wars. You know, one place sells five tokens for $1 and the place down the street sells eight for $1 etc. These token wars, just like the gasoline wars, are great for the customers but really bad for the locations. Once you've discounted your tokens too much, people aren't willing to go back to paying a quarter for a token. Kids even bought tokens in one location and used them somewhere else. That's why we recommend that each location in an area have different sized tokens.

Here's a great opportunity for some wanting to use tokens. Coke or Pepsi sponsors the use of tokens. Here's how it works: You approach Coke or Pepsi and agree to put their logo on one side of your token if they pay for the tokens. You'll also sell their brand in your location's concession stand. It's worth asking the question, "We are opening an FEC with concessions and we are hoping you'd consider helping us with our tokens. Our name will be on one side and yours on the other."

Advantages of using tokens:

1. Kids spend tokens more freely. They don't look at a token as real money. The best kept secret is the walk-away feature. Someone's late or just leaves with three or four tokens left. They figure they'll come back later but even if they do return they'll forget those tokens and buy more. But if they are looking for a place to go, they'll be reminded of your place when they see those tokens.

> ***"This industry is a great industry if you have the proper attitude and a generous helping of common sense."***

2. Promotions of all kinds. The two best weeks of the year are Thanksgiving and the week between Christmas and the New Year. That leaves lots of days and nights you would consider slow. Why not offer six tokens for $1. You're not giving anything away, you're creating a traffic builder. Your customers will perceive a value. You make more money with promotions, but I must caution you to keep it under control.

This industry is a great industry if you have the proper attitude and a generous helping of common sense. There are larger FECs with major investors. Overall no one can stand still. You're either moving forward or slipping backwards. Keep promoting, even if you're the only game in town. Someone will be looking to knock you out of your position. Experience is knowing what you should NOT do. Think quality, attitude, promotions, and tokens! ▲

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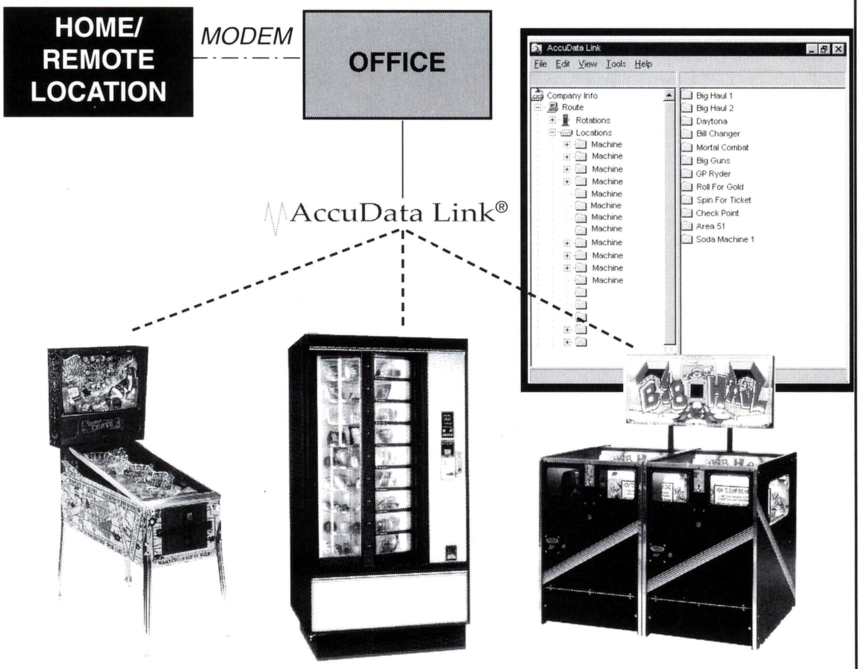

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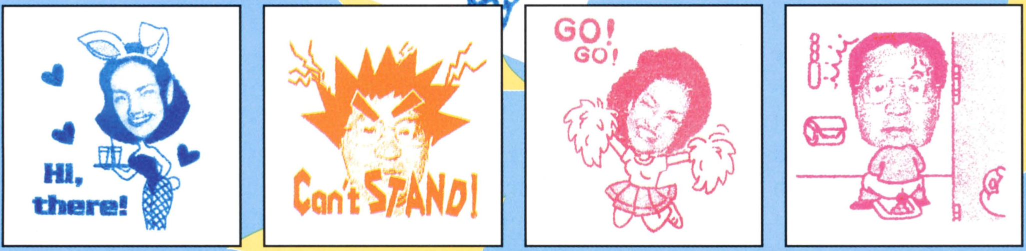
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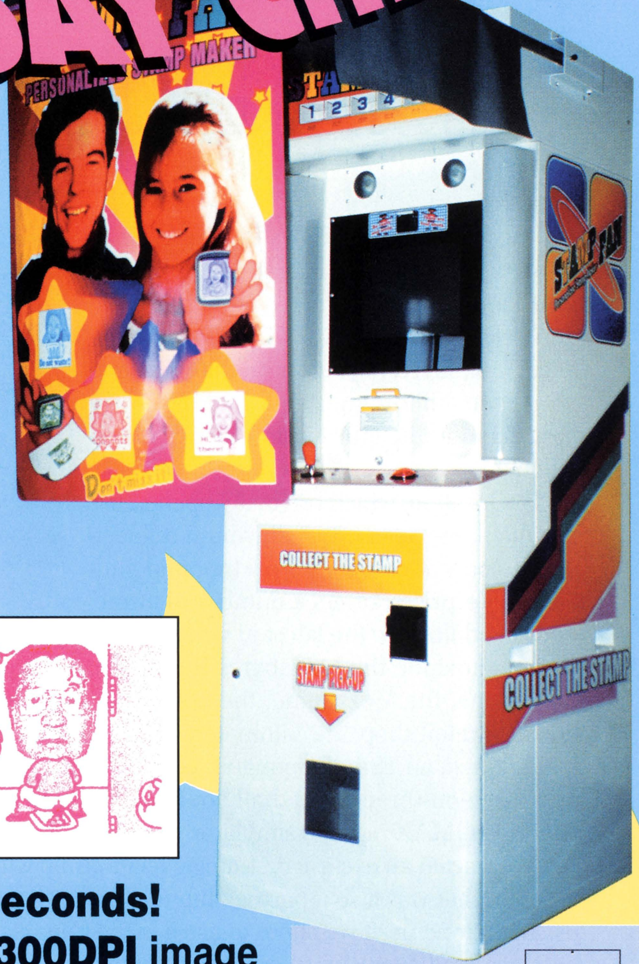
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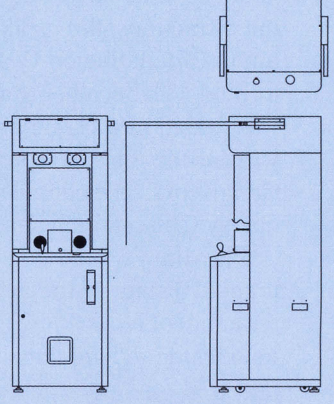

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Since opening its doors in Mississauga, Canada, just outside Toronto in September 1996 Playdium, a high-tech family fun center designed to appeal to a broad core audience, has played host to more than one and a quarter million guests all looking to try their hand at the latest in interactive entertainment.

The location, which originally opened under the name Sega City@Playdium refelecting the parent company's partnership with Sega Enterprises, offers a number of attractions in addition to the latest in video game play.

They include the Megabytes Restaurant, an Open Air play arena, the Mezzanine, the Toronto Blue Jays' Clubhouse, a retail shop, 1.2 kilometers of Grand Prix go-kart racing track, an 18-hole minigolf course, beach volleyball and three-on-three basketball courts, and the first North American IMAX ridefilm simulator.

"We started an exclusive, strategic relationship with Sega of Japan that was also a partnership that encompassed the use of their name, if we chose to use it in the Canadian marketplace, and exclusivity over what they term their medium attractions, things like Virtua Indy," explained Playdium president Steven Warsh. "Then Sega GameWorks was formed with Sega being a shareholder, and our partnership was folded into GameWorks. Since then, that partnership was turned into a 16 percent ownership in our company. GameWorks is essentially a passive shareholder in Playdium. We still retain the exclusive rights from Sega of Japan."

Playdium's 33,000-square-foot complex holds more than 180 state-of-the-art video games and immersive entertainment attractions. The selection of games, which does not include redemption, is weighted toward high-end video simulators, most of which are linked together to enhance the gamer's experience. This is part of Playdium's philosophy of broadening player appeal by eschewing traditional arcade strategies.

According to Warsh, the video game industry has been perceived in Canada as "the dirty dark arcade generally populated by teenage boys. If you take gaming and put it into a clean, safe environment with a great design and great customer service, you have a very broad audience," he said. "Our concept has proven that. We have become an entertainment category killer. There has always been a void between the mom and pop operators and the large theme parks."

Warsh's partner, John Hussman, began anaylyzing how people spend their discretionary money and realized that consumers were spending an average of 13 percent more a year on entertainment than soft goods. "Obviously that translates into real estate use," Warsh noted. "We believe this becomes a long-term trend, and the ability to cluster entertainment opportunities together creates a much broader offering."

Playdium's unique attractions include its IMAX ridefilm simulator, several Virtual Gliders from Evans & Sutherland, and a year-round baseball entertainment and training facility called the Clubhouse. The Clubhouse offers variable speed batting cages and an omni-turf practice facility, which is home to many Toronto Blue Jays for on- and off-season events including player appearances, baseball clinics, and fan activities, as well as special events, corporate outings, and parties.

"It has helped legitimize us with the baseball community

> ***"It's all about the sustainability of your business. You can open up and have a great design and great games, but if you can't sustain your business you have nothing."***

in the local area and created alliances with groups interested in baseball which produce a synergy between the specialized area and the rest of the location," Warsh noted.

Zoning and segmentation

Playdium has actively pursued the strategies of zoning and market segmentation, both of which help the location overcome the possibility of being stereotyped, in order to appeal to the wider audience they are seeking. The first broadens that appeal at the location level while the second allows the staff to divide and conquer by promoting different events for the different customer demographics.

Playdium is divided into five themed zones. They are: Speed, which features the latest driving and racing simulators; Adrenaline, offering the current rage in high-tech, high-touch interactive simulators from companies like Sega, Namco, and Interactive Light as well as the IMAX film ride; Extreme, showcasing the latest in fighting and combat arcade titles; Rewind and Refuel, including the Megabytes Diner, bar and lounge, outdoor Patio, and the Playdium store; and Outdoors with the Blue Jay's Clubhouse and Mario Andretti Grand Prix Raceway go-kart track as well as minigolf, rock climbing, basketball, and volleyball.

In comparison to the labyrinthine, high-tech GameWorks locations in the United States, which focus on the hardcore gaming community and young adult population, this structure provides customers with a sense of place. "You know where you are and what areas you need to go visit," said Warsh. "GameWorks' philosophy is very different. They want you to explore."

While zoning is important, Warsh says it only achieves the desired result when you are properly addressing a customer's emotions. "How do you strike that chord you are looking for?" he asked rhetorically. "That's what we focus on. It's about attitude. Our employees are called Playmasters. They are part entertainer, part concierge, part gamer."

The Gamemaster's job is to teach and encourage players who are more hesitant to approach games or haven't patronized an arcade since they were in high school or college. "It's the small things that really count," added Warsh.

Playdium's core audience can be broken down into five categories. They are: family households, tweens/teenagers, the 19-40 crowd, corporate groups, and tourists. Mississauga is an upper middle class bedroom community with continued high growth over the past few years, a good first test site for this kind of suburban LBE location.

Corporate customers can be subdivided further into groups including birthday parties, youth travel groups, bus tours, and corporate groups (the last comprising 20 percent of the location's business). The location's sales and marketing staff of six pursues these types of customers.

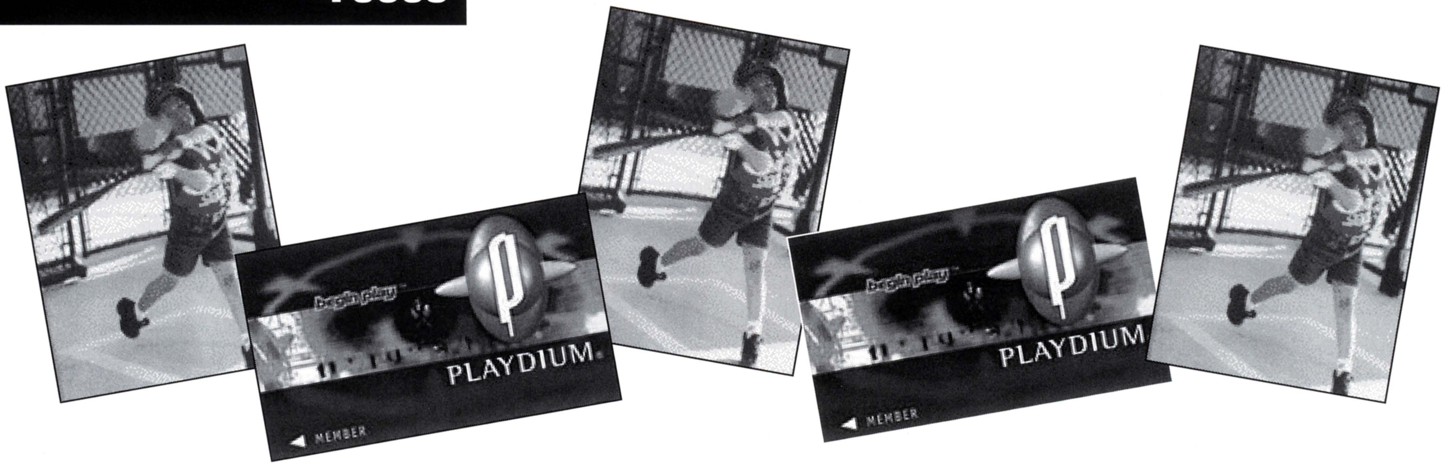
"We focused very closely on that market and we can create any type of package for them with team-building exercises and selected food offerings," said Warsh, who credits massive efforts to capture marketing data for much of the location's success in market segmentation. Playdium's tracking system of data draws heavily on its Playcard system and membership base of 150,000 customers.

Playdium hopes to broaden player appeal with a plethora of linked video simulators.

The location has been very successful in market segmentation, generating maximum revenue from each customer demographic.

The Playcard system also facilitates more effective pricing, with attractions priced at a premium during high traffic times and discounted during the off hours through different pay-as-you-play, fixed price, and time options. Examples include early bird specials on Saturdays and Midnight Madness on Friday night when customers can play from 12- 4 a.m. for a flat fee of $20. The average price per play on games ranges from $1.25 to $1.50.

"We probably know more about our customers than anybody else in this industry," added Warsh. "We've been able to move our teenage audience to Wednesday night for instance, while our 19 and overs come on Friday. Using marketing strategies based on information we have gleaned, we have been able to successfully segment these different audiences. It's all about the sustainability of your business. You can open up and have a great design and great games, but if you can't sustain your business you have nothing."



The Clubhouse offers variable speed batting cages and an omni-turf practice facility.; Playdium uses its Playcard system to maximum benefit for both pricing and collecting marketing data.

Plans for the future

In addition to its Mississauga location, Playdium Entertainment operates 15 arcade-style game centers across Canada and has announced plans to open three more LBE centers and as many as 18 more game centers later this year and during the first quarter of 1999. The arcade locations range in size from 800 to 1,500 square feet.

The company's long-term plans includes the development of close to 100 arcade-style game centers, approximately 20 medium tier locations that will measure approximately 15,000 square feet, and eight to 10 large scale locations. A number of these locations will be operated in conjunction with movie theater chains such as Viacom's Famous Players and Cineplex Odion.

Warsh said the small and medium-size facilities fit into Playdium's plan for developing a channel of "downstream distribution" for product in order to keep game offerings in the high-end LBE centers as fresh as possible. "The focus is on a mix in these game centers," he explained "At least 20 percent of the games will be new games. The rest can be anywhere from one to four years old."

This intense focus on games reflects the dominant role they play in producing revenue at Playdium with more than 80 percent of the facility's income generated by these attractions. While the center's demographic base of customers closely mirrors that of Dave & Buster's, Warsh said redemption was unsuccessful in Canada where it succeeded in the United States.

"Our laws in Canada limited the quality of prizes, but it never really seemed that important to our guests," he said. "Even when we had redemption, the customers enjoyed playing the games but they weren't redeeming the tickets."

> ***"GameWorks is essentially a passive shareholder in Playdium."***

When asked about advances in high-tech equipment, Warsh expressed little hope for virtual reality but saw promise in the possibility of networking traditional game play using PC technology. "I have never really been a fan of VR and have yet to see anything that compelling," he explained. "The repeatability has never been that good. If you want your LBE to work, you need to be able to change your content.

"In my personal view, the PC holds a different opportunity," Warsh continued. "PCs will allow us to unbox gaming and give us different play formats and create an element of socialization. Right now if you are playing a game, you are pretty zoned in on that one game and there is not a lot of socialization going on. PC gaming and networking will create more opportunities for socialization. We are excited about PC gaming but not in the way it has been discussed."

Playdium Entertainment is currently working on some as-yet-unannounced projects that will tap into opportunities presented by computer networking, said Warsh, who also sees a further growth in the popularity of games that engage players both mentally and physically..

"I think directionally where Sega and Namco and Interactive Light are going is really in touch with this major trend of physical interactivity," he said. "Whether is *Bass Fishing* or *Kick-It*, those games have a much broader player appeal."

Ultimately, broader appeal is what it's all about for Playdium Entertainment as it attempts to redefine the concept of video game play in Canada, providing a space for the entire family to enjoy interactive entertainment and growing an industry that has seen its customer base and earnings shrink in recent years.

For more information, contact Playdium, 99 Rathburn Road West, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada; (905)273 4810; fax (905)273 5482; Web site (http://www.playdium.com). ▲

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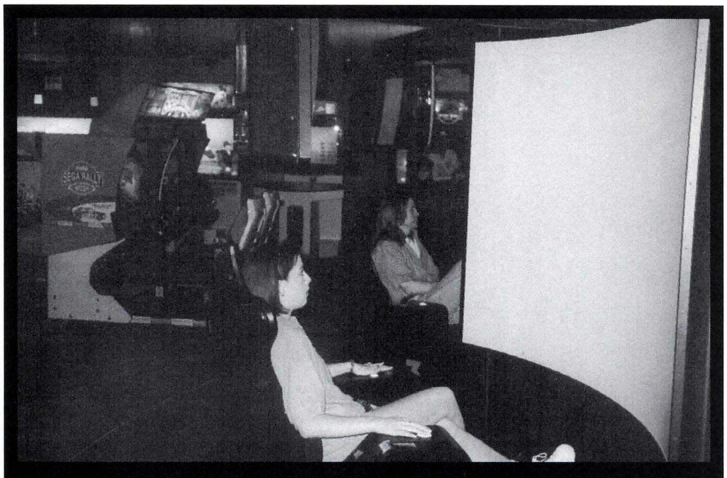
SCORING **SUCCESS**

LBE Systems launches QUAKE at GAME WORKS

LBE Systems' David Foley (l) and John Fowler with the Quake installation at GameWorks Grapevine.


Both male and female players showed enthusiasm over the arcade version of Quake.

From left: LBE Systems' John Fowler and Sega GameWorks Susan Steinberg and Phil Foley.

Less than 24 hours after the deadline for paying Uncle Sam his due had come and gone, patrons at the Sega GameWorks in Grapevine, Texas, found themselves in a taxing situation of a different nature.

While an arcade version of Id Software's smash consumer hit Quake had been running on the location's premium game platform, the Game Arc, for several months, engineers with Location-Based Entertainment (LBE) Systems of Richardson, Texas, spent much of April 15 and 16 installing the completed software, which is now ready to ship to operators around the world.

"The players' response to seeing Quake in our venue has been filled with excitement, particularly with the game's popular death match signature," said Grapevine GameWorks team member Phil Foley. "The appearance of Quake in GameWorks has allowed gamers to show off their Internet-honed skills in a public forum and exchange war stories of death match highlights."

The first-person shooter is being released under the name *Quake Tournament Edition* and has been modified by LBE Systems to feature a number of arcade-style play features and one entire level of action never before seen in consumer versions.

"Since January, we realized we needed to do some fine tuning and we have been able to steadily increase earnings," said LBE System's head of sales and marketing John Fowler during the installation of final software at GameWorks Grapevine. "Now it's ready to go."

LBE Systems' general manager of product development David Foley, who overseas all game conversion and work on the company's SparkyNet Operating System (OS), said *Quake Tournament Edition* offers fans of the game a completely new play experience.

"First of all we've got levels and weapons you can't get at home and it's running on hardware that very few people have at home," he explained. "That's also where the death match competition comes into play. You hone your skills at home and then you come here for bragging rights."

"GT Interactive is spending a couple of million dollars promoting Quake on Nintendo 64," added Fowler. "There is an advantage to being close to the consumer release. It's a franchise or a brand."

Creating an electronic franchise will also provide opera-

There is an afterlife.

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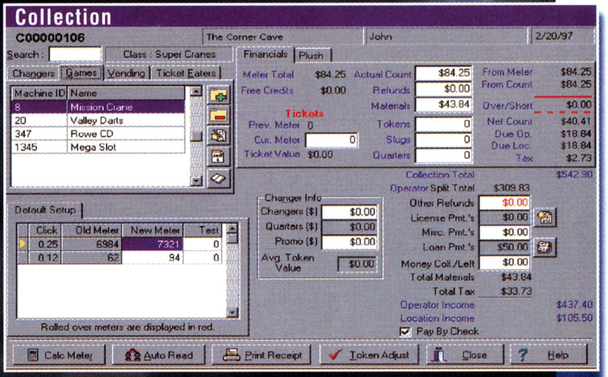

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Machine ID	Name
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347	Rowe CD
1345	Mega Slot

Click	Old Meter	New Meter	Test
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0.12	62	94	0

Rolled over meters are displayed in red.

Meter Total $84.25
Free Credits $0.00

Tickets
Prev. Meter 0
Cur. Meter 0
Ticket Value $0.00

Actual Count $84.25
Refunds $0.00
Materials $43.84
Tokens 0
Slugs 0
Quarters 0

From Meter $84.25
From Count $84.25
Over/Short $0.00
Net Count $40.41
Due Op. $18.84
Due Loc. $18.84
Tax $2.73

Changer Info
Changers ($) $0.00
Quarters ($) $0.00
Promo ($) $0.00
Avg. Token Value $0.00

Collection Total $542.90
Operator Split Total $309.83
Other Refunds $0.00
License Pmt.'s $0.00
Misc. Pmt.'s $0.00
Loan Pmt.'s $50.00
Money Coll./Left $0.00
Total Materials $43.84
Total Tax $33.73
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Location Income $105.50
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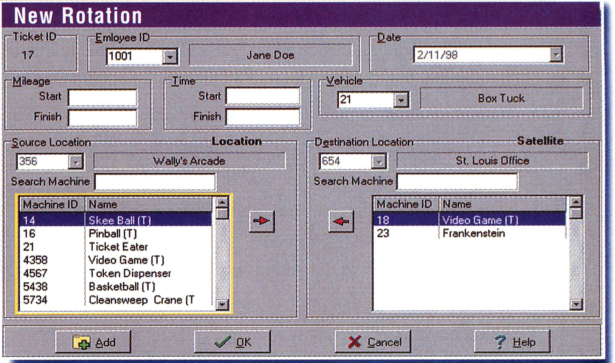

Ticket ID 17
Emloyee ID 1001 Jane Doe
Date 2/11/98
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Time Start Finish
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Source Location **Location**
356 Wally's Arcade
Search Machine

Machine ID	Name
14	Skee Ball (T)
16	Pinball (T)
21	Ticket Eater
4358	Video Game (T)
4567	Token Dispenser
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MS-DOS is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation tors with a chance to become part of a greater whole, explained Fowler, who was initially looking at networked game play in retail environments. However, the focus shifted to the arcade as it became clear that PC powerhouses like Intel were getting behind the Open Arcade Architecture Initiative.

"Why waste time trying to create a market in retail when there was this niche forming in the arcade market?" asked Fowler, a veteran of Atari and Midway Games. "From there we really moved into this quickly. We can create a box that is a single or double unit. But an operator can also put a host server in a location that will manage all the audit functions as well as run all the games, music videos, etc. Through electronic commerce software, the player can also buy the home version and that becomes another source of revenue."

It's this vision of a wired world, or at least a wired location, that Fowler calls the "ultimate goal of SparkyNet."

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The Arena at GameWorks features high-end simulators including Indy 500.

The second floor of GameWorks Grapevine offers full-service dining, a juice and coffee bar, and a full-service cocktail lounge with billiard area.

TRON
ROBOTRON

Classic games, which appeal to older players, are housed in these vintage-style wooden cabinets.

THE LOCATION

GameWorks Grapevine opened in October of last year as part of the Grapevine Mills high-end retail center approximately 20 miles from Dallas. The circular-designed mall, located near the Dallas-Ft. Worth Airport, stretches a mile long and is dotted with name brand retailers such as The Gap, Old Navy, and Starbucks coffee.

The third GameWorks location to open and the second to open in conjunction with a Mills retail center, GameWorks Grapevine measures 32,000 square feet and features GameWorks' signature playing zones such as the Loading Dock, Arena, and Loft.

Games on location include all the latest high-tech simulators from Sega, Namco, and other coin-op industry manufacturers, as well as a complete offering of redemption and table games and an assortment of classic video games displayed in upscale wooden cabinets.

In addition, the Loft area offers full food and beverage service, a juice and coffee bar, and a full service bar and billiard table area, all soaked in an urban, high-tech atmosphere created by the sounds and scenes of music videos running throughout the location.

However, the centerpieces of all GameWorks locations, including Grapevine, are the two signature game units: Vertical Reality and Game Arc. In the first, players experience physical consequences based on their skill level, ascending the vertical playfield as they succeed and descending as they get hit.

The Game Arc is a high-end, networked game platform featuring real-time conferencing technology and state-of-the-art video games, including Quake. In fact, the installation of an arcade version of Quake, running on Open Arcade Architecture standard 266 MHz Pentium II hardware, replaced an earlier home title, Descent, published by Interplay, that was utilizing off-the-shelf Compaq hardware.

THE GAME

Quake Tournament Edition can operate in single or multiplayer mode, and will be released in 27-inch and 33-inch cabinet versions. LBE Systems also intends to release the game as part of a kit, allowing operators to install the PC game engine into an existing cabinet and utilize older monitors and game control interfaces. A set of prefabricated controls will also be available.

"There's a whole class of operators who want to keep their old monitors and wood and we have developed a video card that will drive a VGA or CGA monitor," said LBE Systems' David Foley. "A lot of OAAF members have said 'too bad' to operators on this issue. We are the only ones so far offering this format. We are looking to do a number of cheap kit games for operators that aren't a great big investment for them."

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The arcade version of Quake utilizes Quantum3D's Obsidian SB100 chipset including dual 3Dfx Interactive graphics accelerator chips, producing 60 frames per second. The game's death match features interactive, networked competition between players or simulated competition between a single player and robot competitors that have been added to game play. The units are linked directly, not through a central server, and as many as 64 players can be linked together.

"We are in the process of wiring up GameWorks Grapevine here and GameWorks in Ontario, Calif.; you need a DSL or an ISDN line as a minimum requirement to link location to location," said Foley. "There are always six players in a multiplayer death match. If I join by myself, there will be five other robots. The robots are intelligent. They learn the level. The longer you play, the better they get just like a human player would."

GameWorks Grapevine's Phil Foley gave the SparkyNet OS high marks for reliability on location. "The reliability rating data for the entire system based on information generated from five GameWorks units across the country has been an impressive 95 to 100 percent, said Foley, who toured the country with LBE for the initial game setup at all five GameWorks locations. "From a technical support side this package is a production-ready, bulletproof system. We haven't had a single problem with any of the 20 seats we purchased."

Multiplayer game play is determined by time. Under factory settings, players are given four and a half minutes of game play. Single player action allows players three character lives, and while time does diminish a character's so-called health, there is a reserve level ensuring that players' lives do not simply expire after a certain period of time. Suggested price per play ranges from 75 cents to $2.

Difficulty levels have also been ramped up so the game becomes increasingly difficult, driving the coin drop. The home version allowed players to select a static difficulty level. The game's attract mode features players tips, displayed in third-person perspective so viewers can see how their character interacts with on-screen opponents.

The SparkyNet OS also acts as a translator between the game and Windows 95, eliminating some automatic functions and forcing checks before the game boots up. "We've made a number of changes to Windows," explained David Foley. "They allow Windows to become a dedicated box. With SparkyNet, for instance, you can power off and on without any problem coming up."

As part of its work on the SparkyNet OS, LBE Systems has included a wide range of operator-adjustable features that will allow all game play and pricing controls, as well as audit and diagnostic functions, to be easily manipulated for maximum earning potential.

The controls are accessed through a keyboard and allow the operator to adjust coins per credit, lives per credit, coins to continue, lives to continue, the auxiliary coin door and bill acceptor, buy-in time, and the attract mode and messages.

Game play features such as health and reserve health levels, stalled time, checkpoint increments, death match settings, trackball settings, sensitivity control, and alternative input device options can also be controlled through the SparkyNet OS. Foley said the system even includes filters to seek out problems when the unit is wired to an older monitor and set of controls.

"Normally, you would have to go out and get a meter and check," he explained. "Here you can just pull up a screen. We have also developed a video card that will drive an old VGA or CGA monitor."

THE FUTURE

LBE Systems is looking at releasing a number of titles before the end of the year, which will allow operators to upgrade their initial game units by simply installing a new CD-ROM and adding new graphics.

Upcoming games include *Big Balls* (a working title), which features two-player tag controlled by giant trackballs; *Quake II*, also from id Software; a racing title and a gun game scheduled for summer release; *Death Rally Extreme*, a racing/attack game developed by Finland-based Remedy and published by GT Interactive; an arcade version of the puzzle game *Tang Chi Masters*; and a second racing title and a sports title both scheduled for winter release.

"The Open Arcade Architecture drops a huge barrier to entry into the market," noted Fowler. "Game machines are now like pegs in a retail store, and all operators have to ask is, 'What can I sell on this peg?' We are pursing titles that are going to sell for the operators. Our goal is to create an open system that is game-oriented."

LBE is currently pursing several different paths to market, including agreements with certain value-add manufacturers including Opus Entertainment, which will introduce its games as part of a turnkey system including game machine, software, cabinet, monitor, and controls. Licensing the SparkyNet OS to other Arcade PC manufacturers would increase the number of available titles for both companys' hardware systems.

The company is also setting up distribution for its Legacy kits, which will provide a hardware upgrade for existing game cabinets, and looking at potential Internet sales.

During the installation of *Quake Tournament Edition* on GameWorks's signature Game Arc multiplayer game kiosk, which features individual projection screens, LBE met with several Dallas area software developers. The company also showed off the high-end arcade version for members of the development team at id Software. Representatives of game development firms expressed enthusiasm about potential exposure for their titles in the arcade.

"I think the exposure in the arcade would be fantastic," said Jeff Smith, public relations director for Terminal Reality, a Lewisville, Texas, -based game development firm that recently put out its Monster Truck PC title for the home.

"We are trying to show the developers that they can go back to their publishers and say this is the system we want to write our software to for the arcade," added Fowler. ▲

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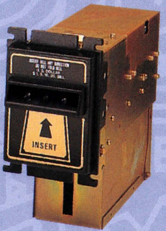

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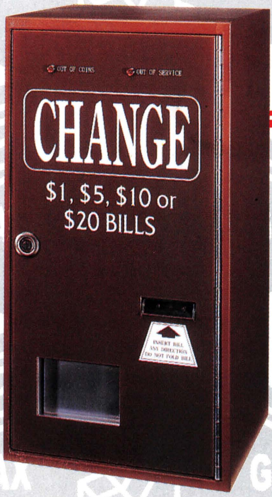
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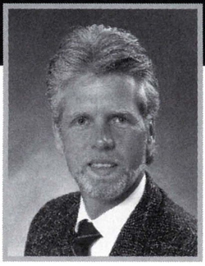


STEVE McCAUL

Bowling center TRANSFORMATION adds excitement

How to turn an ordinary bowling center into an extraordinary entertainment experience without breaking the bank.

It is possible to transform a classic bowling center into a full-fledged entertainment center. With a modest investment, some innovative ideas, a few cosmetic changes, and old-fashioned "spit and polish," such a location can show a substantial increase in revenue. This scenario works as well with family entertainment centers.

NEED TO CHANGE

Now let's be honest...most individuals do not like to change if they feel they already are running a successful business. The common response to a suggestion of change is, "We did it this way before and we were successful, so why should we change?" Why? Because we are in the Entertainment Business and in order to hold the interest of our customers, changes have to be made to keep them returning again and again.

TOO MANY CUTBACKS

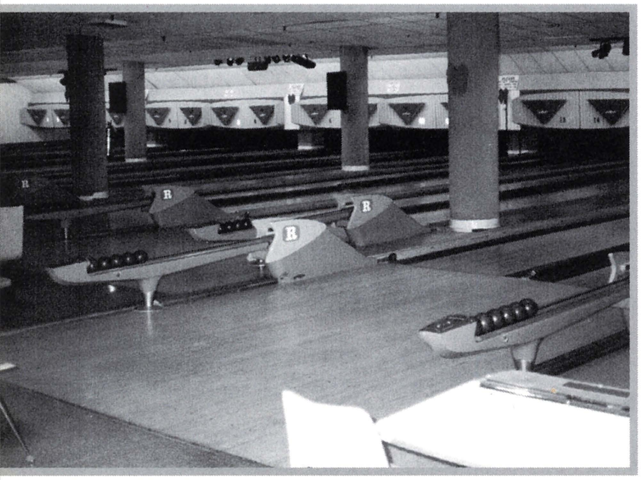
If a bowling center's business is falling off, often the existing manager (a dedicated company person) thinks he is helping the company by cutting back on what he considers to be unnecessary expenses. Advertising is usually the first to be cut from the operating budget in order to hold back costs. Next is the cleaning company.

Thinking further along, the manager determines that if some employees are laid off, more company money will be saved. The well-intentioned manager's next approach is to cut back the operating hours. It seems logical, he reasons, that if the establishment opens later and closes earlier, employee salaries will be reduced as well as other operating expenses.

On the surface, the manager is doing a great job of cutting expenses to help keep the business running, but the truth of the matter is that he is turning away customers—not only existing customers but also the possibility of new customers!

ADD TO THE CORE BUSINESS

The fact is that bowling has been declining at bowling centers where change has been resisted. Randomly



Left photo: Lanes as they looked before Cosmic Bowling. Note the speakers and lights in the ceiling.

Right photo: Strobe lights and fog add a nightclub atmosphere to Cosmic Bowling that starts at 9:30 p.m.

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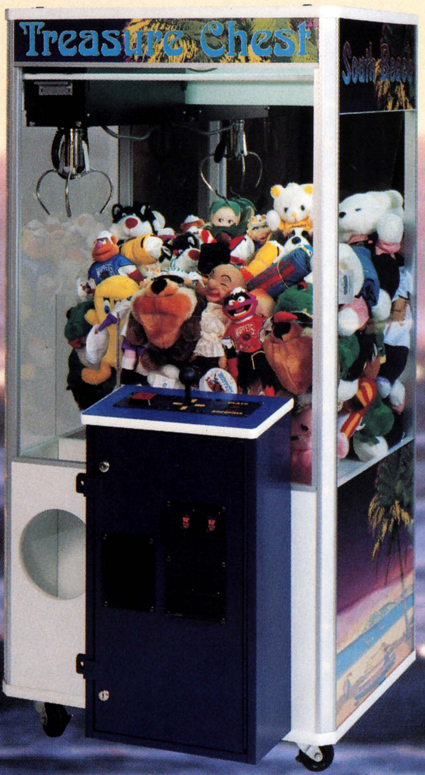
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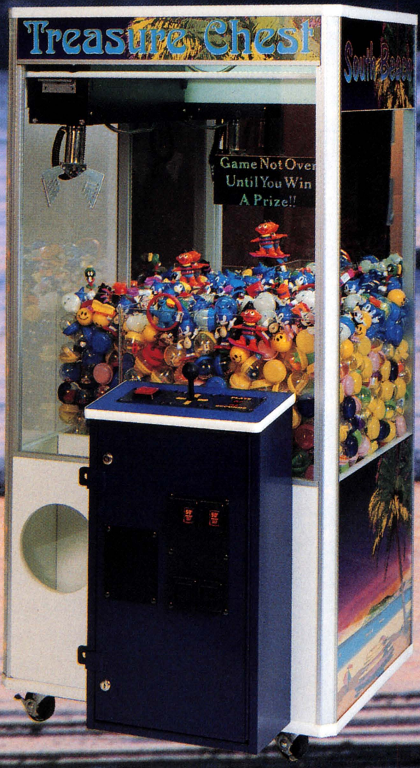
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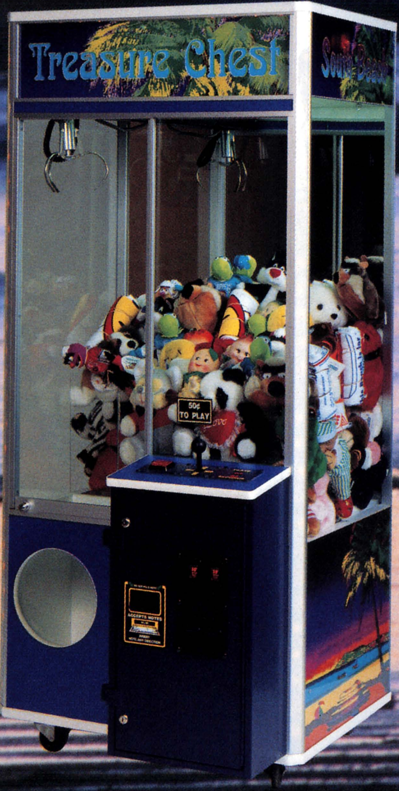
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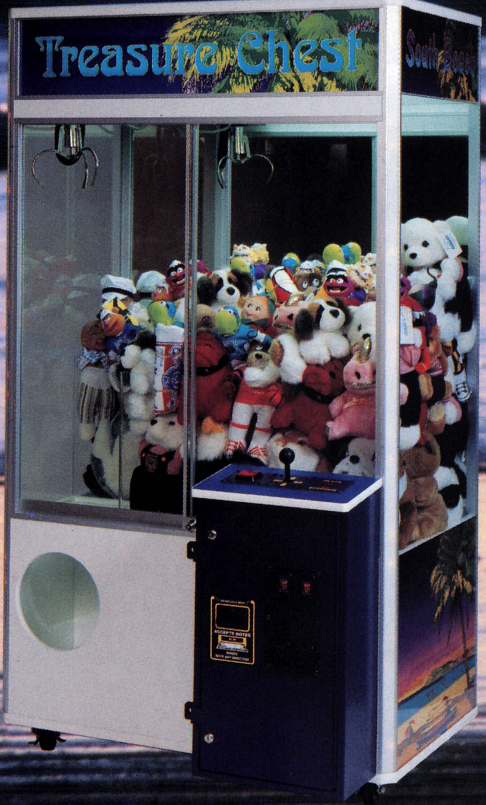
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The billiard room got a facelift.

STARTING IN MAY!

The mixing board for operating the music and lights of Cosmic Bowling.

A larger, improved control counter serves customers more efficiently.

Game room equipment was upgraded.

cutting costs while waiting for bowling to cycle back around again is careless. The bowling centers that have turned themselves around realized that they are not only in the bowling business but also in the Entertainment Business.

Bowling used to be the main attraction; however, it is now only part of the equation. The more aggressive centers have added restaurants, lounges, and full-blown game rooms. Birthday parties have also crept into the bowling business in a big and successful way.

NEW-AGE BOWLING

The latest idea to attach itself to the bowling industry is Cosmic Bowling, also known as Extreme Bowling, Atomic Bowling, Glo Bowling, Mystic Bowling, etc. The concept of Cosmic Bowling gives your center a nightclub atmosphere while your patrons bowl.

An investment in a mega sound system for the music is essential for the Cosmic Bowling experience. The installation of a state-of-the art strobe-style lighting system with laser beams, along with fog to bend the lights as they flash, gives a bowling center the desired effect for Cosmic Bowling.

This can cost as much as $20,000 to $30,000. As a testament to the success of Cosmic Bowling, centers are now taking reservations for the nights they offer this unique, updated bowling experience.

A CASE HISTORY

Following is a case history that actually happened in a classic bowling center that needed a change. A new manager was asked to look at the center, evaluate it, and determine if Cosmic Bowling was worth undertaking.

The existing center had bowling lanes, a billiard room, and a small game room. The new manager was a bit of a risk since he knew nothing about the business of bowling. He was very knowledgeable about the coin-op game business and was familiar with billiard rooms. Being a former disc jockey, his music background was key to implementing the sound system necessary to launch Cosmic Bowling.

Approximately six months ago this new manager was introduced to the employees of the bowling center and unveiled the new plan of action. The plan was to commence Cosmic Bowling, spruce up the billiard room and game room, offer birthday party packages, and keep the leagues and existing staff in place.

The first order of business was to reinstate the professional cleaning company. Bathrooms were re-tiled and got a fresh coat of paint. In the billiard room, 25-inch televisions were hooked up to a satellite dish offering customers sports channels and MTV while playing a game of pool. In addition, a sound system was installed to enhance the MTV music station or the music from the CD jukebox. Photographs relating to sports themes were hung around the room to add to the atmosphere. Game room equipment was upgraded.

The major expense in converting this classic bowling center was the installation of a form of Cosmic Bowling. This involved a superb sound system, strobe-style lighting, fog, the whole nine yards. Construction to the control counter was also necessary for this transformation. An additional 10 feet was added to incorporate a control center for the new Cosmic Bowling, and a larger area was dedicated to serve customers more efficiently.

Signage was updated to the existing front window of the building, which introduced this new concept to the general public. A disco ball was added for flash, which attracted attention, brought people to the entrance of the center, and successfully translated into new customers.

Once inside, the atmosphere becomes contagious. New games, good music, and a billiard room with large televisions all add to the new experience in an old classic bowling center.

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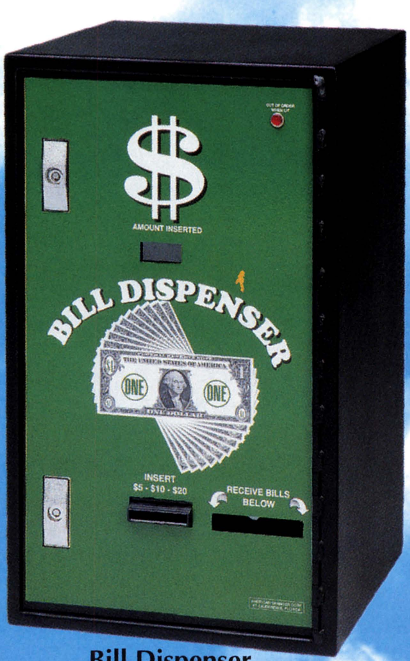
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ter's birthday party packages and group corporate function packages. Here's where advertising and promotion came into the picture. Getting the word out was accomplished through the use of local cable media advertising, the distribution of flyers at the center, and the use of coupons.

Because you can vary the type of music dedicated to particular groups of clientele, there is no limit to the age you can entertain. It goes without saying that you will see increases across the board: in bowling, games, billiards, and food sales because you now offer entertainment to an expanded audience.

In addition, the hours of operation were extended. Cosmic Bowling customers begin at 9:30 p.m. after league bowling. Closing is at midnight.

This bowling center still has a unique charm, but it has been rejuvenated. It maintains some of its former character, but there is an exciting feel to the place now. I am speaking firsthand because the new manager is my younger brother P.J. McCaul and the center belongs to Ryan Family Amusements where I am proud to say I worked for 13 years.

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Do:

1. Do maintain a meticulously clean facility
2. Do hire and train a friendly staff
3. Do upgrade game room and sports equipment
4. Do offer birthday party and group packages
5. Do advertise and spread the word about your center
6. Do consider a new approach to bowling (Cosmic Bowling, anyone?)

Don't:

1. Don't concentrate on cutbacks and forget to generate new business
2. Don't underestimate the impact of a can of paint and a little elbow grease
3. Don't limit your customer base
4. Don't settle for "the way it's always been done"
5. Don't have inconvenient hours of operation
6. Don't be afraid of change; with change comes growth

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SURROUNDINGS

This center can be found under historic Fenway Park in Boston, Mass. Although Fenway Park is a famous landmark, it never really helped the bowling center business since people only come in to go to the game and leave right afterward.

When you give directions to the bowling center the benefit is that everyone knows where Fenway Park is located. Now, the new manager has the task of letting everyone know that there is a new reason to visit this old classic bowling center found under historic Fenway Park. The center has capitalized on its location by offering tours of Fenway Park with its birthday party packages during the Boston Red Sox season. ▲

Steve McCaul is a consultant and redemption specialist with his own company, Global Equipment Exchange, in Kingston, Mass., (781)585-8600; fax (781)585-8399. He can also be reached on the Internet (global-1@mail.idt.net).

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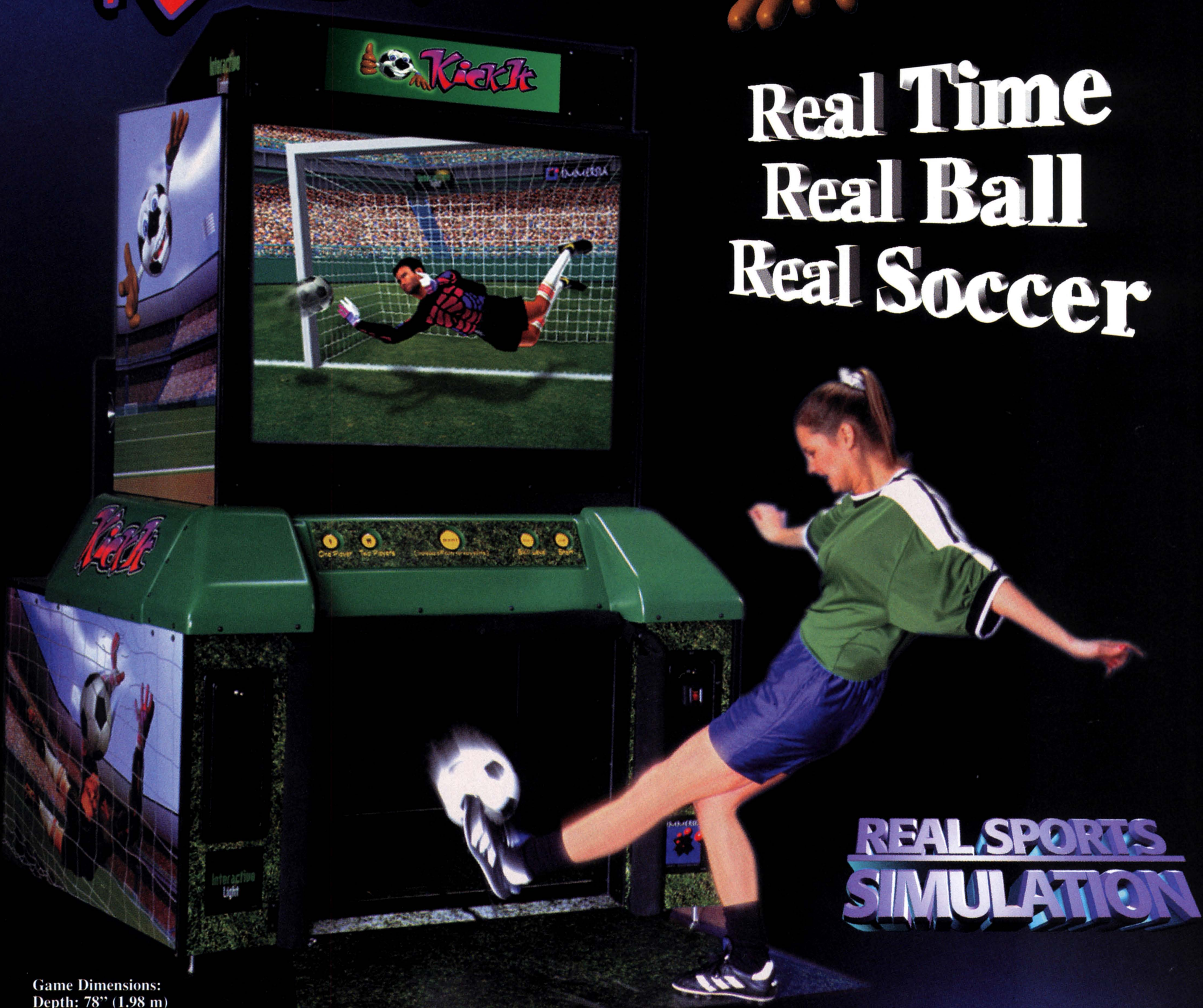
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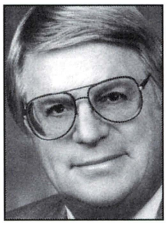
Street operators see opportunity in FECs

AS PART OF OUR ANNUAL FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTER ISSUE, WE TALKED TO CURRENT AMOA PRESIDENT DON HESCH AND ASSOCIATION TREASURER AND INCOMING FIRST VICE PRESIDENT FRANK SENINSKY ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTERS (FECS), WHAT THAT TREND HAS MEANT TO STREET OPERATORS, AND HOW AMOA HAS RESPONDED.

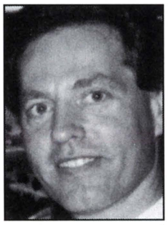
STEVE WHITE

They offer an interesting counterpoint. Hesch's company, A.H. Entertainers in Rolling Meadows, Ill., is heavily involved in street operations and vending with some small amount of experience partnering with FECs. Seninsky's Alpha-Omega Amusements in East Brunswick, N.J., has made a name for itself in recent year's operating the amusement games for FECs across the country. Here's what they had to say:

What percentage, in rough numbers, of AMOA members operates family entertainment centers? Of those, how many own FECs and how many serve as third party contractors running games in someone else's location?

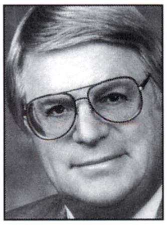


HESCH: That's a pretty tough question to answer. As far as people operating games in FECs, that's probably a group of 10 percent of the membership. I think there is a lot of co-op activity, as far as operators may have a few games in an FEC, the FEC may own a few games, and they may make a pact with the operator to handle service for them. A lot of people have talked about doing redemption, but it's really quite difficult for many operators to run a redemption counter and operation. They usually want the FEC to help with that. I think a lot of operators are really doing well just servicing the redemption games and putting in a few video games. There are all kinds of different packages that AMOA members talk about.



SENINSKY: More and more operators are operating games in FECs but it is still not a large percentage. I do not see a lot of operators at Fun Expo or IAAPA but more are taking an interest. My instinct tells me that less than 10 percent operate games in FECs and even less operate redemption games in FECs. Many FEC owners claim that they have to buy their own redemption games because they can't find an operator in their area who wants to make the investment and jump into operating redemption games. Here I am talking about the smaller centers, because there are a few larger operators, such as my company Alpha-Omega which will operate games in the larger centers that can support 70 plus games. Very few operators own FECs. I can only think of about 20 operators I have talked to over the years, most only have one small FEC.

Do you see the trend of local or regional fun centers growing, stabilizing, or shrinking?



HESCH: I am probably the last guy in the world to ask, but I will say this: We have had a lot of inquiries from large theater groups about investing in their game rooms. So I suspect that we are going to see more and more of that from larger, entertainment-type centers looking at expansion into other entertainment venues. For people to come and spend their time, you must have more than just a good game room. You have to have some good food and a number of other things. You want them there for a half-day at least.

SENINSKY: I see the trend of both local and regional fun centers continuing to grow but they will be part of a larger entertainment area. Many of the sec-

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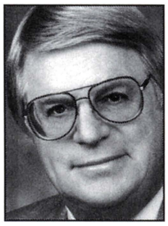
ondary markets are now ready for the next set of investors. Even the major FEC/LBE (location-based entertainment) chains are now getting ready to try their hand at a reduced size concept for smaller markets. Fun centers are being built as a part of multiscreen movie theaters with good restaurants thrown into the mix. The stand-alone small FECs are shrinking. The better ones (those that are 20,000 square feet or more and have multiple attractions) are doing OK and should be able to remain profitable as long as the attractions are continually upgraded and the facilities are kept in top condition.

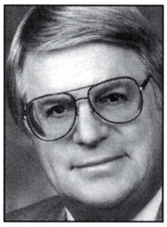
Do you have any personal business experience in operating FECs? If so, will you discuss that experience?



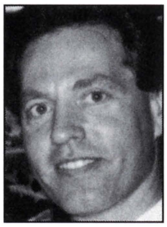
HESCH: We have had a few cooperative efforts with FECs at our company. Some work; some don't. At our company we like to do everything we can as far as limiting our investment but still earning a service fee. I have no problem with that personally. I think it works out well. I think both parties come out of it very well. It just depends on how much service is expected and how well it is delivered.

SENINSKY: I have been personally involved in operating FECs for several years. My consulting company, Amusement Entertainment Management (AEM) has helped more than 150 FECs generate higher revenues, reduce expenses, and protect their asset values. AEM helped write the Standard Operating Procedures (which include safety procedures and forms and checklists for everyday operations) for both FECs and LBEs. This experience has shown me the areas where almost all FECs are lacking. These areas include cash and token control; game and attraction mix; game and attraction purchase, upgrade, and sale; employee training; and marketing the facility as a whole to gain higher per capita spending.

How is the marketplace for street operators affected, when much of the current crop of equipment is aimed at this type of location?

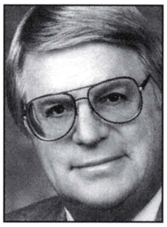


HESCH: We have been starving for equipment. In our operation, we have really been thankful for the Incredible Technologies golf game. The countertop has also done really well, as have some other pieces. But we are really looking for some improvement on the equipment. As I understand, it looks like Sega is going to be coming out with some more pieces of equipment that will be affordable for the operator. We are probably going to see some of that equipment at AMOA Expo in Nashville this fall. That's encouraging, but we are still looking for more equipment for the street operator. Much of the equipment, as you say, has been designed for the FECs. But I think some of the manufacturers realize they have missed this market and are coming back.



SENINSKY: Street operators are starving for equipment that is cost effective for their operations. Recently, however, the manufacturers are starting to fill this void with countertop games, new merchandise-dispensing equipment, and redemption and coupon-dispensing games such as Lazer-Tron's new lineup. The PC-based games hold promise for many great titles at a cost that the street operator can afford. Street operators are a tough breed. The smart ones have secured their locations with long-term contracts and provide many additional services such as leagues and tournaments. Those who are keeping on top of their businesses are doing well currently; those who just put their heads in the sand and have become lazy, won't be around much longer. The smart ones are already buying up the routes that have become available, after seeking professional advice from industry experts as to the profitability of each opportunity.

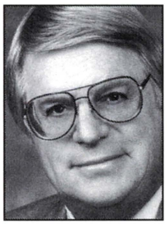
From a street operator's perspective, do FECs constitute competition or opportunity?



HESCH: You know, I don't really know. I personally look at it as an opportunity to offer more equipment in a location or as a service company. I think a lot of people may put their heads in the sand and say, "I am not going to help some guy out who has bought his own equipment." Somebody is going to help him out. It might as well be the street operator if he has the service personnel. It has helped my company grow.

SENINSKY: For some (the smart ones again), FECs are definitely an opportunity. FECs need the services of operators in many different ways. My company has filled those needs, which often means being flexible enough to search for the win-win situation that works best for a particular FEC and my company. Business always just comes down to a numbers game, it doesn't really matter what type of product or service your company sells. All businesses operate on the same principles. Some street operators are just plain stubborn and refuse to deal with any location where they aren't able to operate "all" the games. So they do not even know about the opportunities they are missing.

Do most of your fellow AMOA board members draw a distinction between the traditional arcade and an FEC? If so, what separates the two? What do they share in common?



HESCH: I think there is a distinction between the two. I think the arcade as we know it is going to be less present in the marketplace. In terms of the terminology, I think the FEC is going to be more popular as far as our equipment is concerned.

SENINSKY: A traditional game

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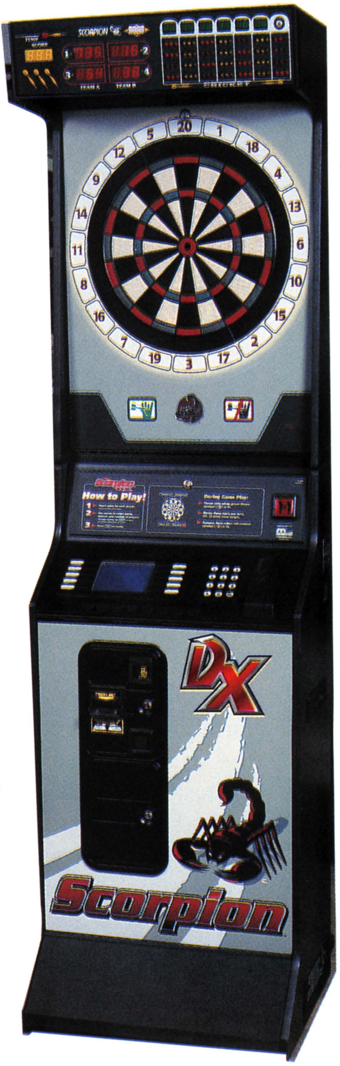

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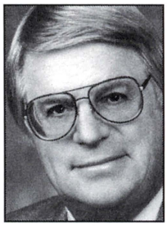
room is not an FEC, even though there could be enough different types of games to attract people of all ages. To be labeled an FEC, there must be one or more attractions in addition to food and games that are usually included to prolong the stay and increase the per capita spending. Many industry members feel that there needs to be more than one attraction and, therefore, do not include soft modular play centers, bowling centers, and laser tag centers as FECs.

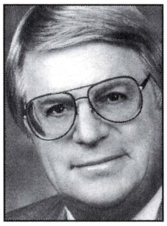
Has AMOA actively represented this segment of the industry in the past?



HESCH: Probably not. That leads into this issue of the formation of an arcade committee, and that just really demonstrates that AMOA hasn't really done a lot to facilitate those people with seminars or whatever might be needed. I know the manufacturers display a lot of equipment that would be used in an FEC, but we haven't brought a lot of those people into our association. I think we should. I think it's probably something we missed years ago. We didn't look at the FEC as a place of opportunity for members of AMOA.

SENINSKY: The operative word here is "actively" and the answer is no. Even though coin-op generates from 30 to 50 percent of an FEC's revenues, it is often the last and least thought through segment of such a facility. The falsehood here is that the games are the so-called easy part of the operation. Perhaps this is why most FEC-owned games generate around $100 per week gross per game on average while my company average is well above $200 per week per game in the FECs that we operate (including those FECs where some of the games are owned by the FEC). To be quite honest, the reason that Fun Expo and IAFEC grew as rapidly as they did was because AMOA did not react to this need in the marketplace to provide education for FEC owners. And Fun Expo and IAFEC have done a great job. AMOA is still split when it comes to the great debate on whether it should be an operators' association or branch out to encompass all aspects of the coin-operated industry. In the last several years, the branching out has been steadily moving forward as evidenced by AMOA's promotion of PC-based games and services and in Developer's Row at AMOA Expo.

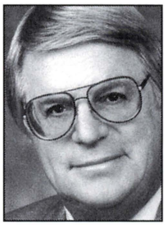
Do ongoing conversations about the formation of an arcade committee constitute a shift in thinking?



HESCH: With the formation of our arcade community and through its efforts to try and develop a good public relations campaign concerning arcades across the country, this should include FECs. They can do both at that point. But that committee hasn't gotten started yet. Steve Siegel is heading up that group and is still getting everything rolling. AMOA and AAMA have put into place a cooperative effort to combine together, along with IAFEC, to promote our equipment and our locations. I think we are starting something. It's a grass roots effort. Steve Siegel has also been put on that committee to be available for those meetings. Hopefully, some FEC operators will think about taking a look at equipment at our show and so on.

SENINSKY: No, I don't see it as a shift in thinking. When the idea for this committee was brought to the Executive Committee, AMOA acted quickly. An arcade committee has been formed and this is a committee that has been needed. Under the leadership of Steve Siegel, the arcade segment will receive information and services that will help improve their revenues by attracting back some of the players that have been lost to the home systems over the years.

Do the interests of FEC and street operators differ in the realm of government relations? If so, how does this affect the task of bringing value to association members? In some cases, do those interests converge (i.e. video content/parental advisory)?



HESCH: Both certainly ought to be interested in video content. This issue down in Florida still hasn't been resolved. Florida operators are still in Tallahassee trying to fight that bill. Time is on our side, but I suspect we are going to have more areas that are going to create problems with video content. That's why it's important that we get everybody involved. AMOA, AAMA, and IAFEC have gotten everything started and are presently putting together information (on the isolation of strongly rated games) to send back to Washington. IAAPA has also joined the effort. We are advising everybody to put rating stickers on all games and we are trying to get manufacturers to put ratings on every game. It's an effort that has started across the board, and hopefully we can get this out to the public before we have any more problems.

SENINSKY: Of course interests differ between the operating segments in our industry. For example, I fully support the tobacco settlement and lobbying efforts because 40 percent of the members operate cigarette machines. I don't operate any and only hope that those who do come out well. This happens often in AMOA because you tend to get those who truly care about this industry to volunteer so much of their time for the good of the industry. Association members benefit in many ways, which often they don't even realize. AMOA is the only organization that protects the big picture for the operator. There are many (including government and big business) that attempt

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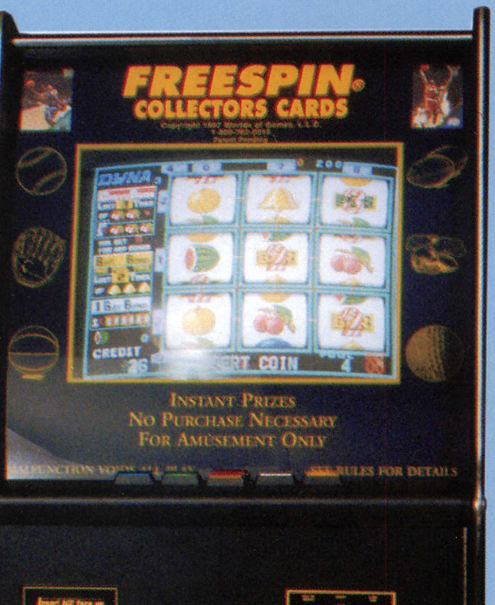
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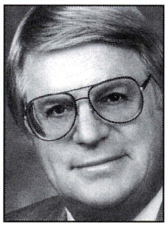
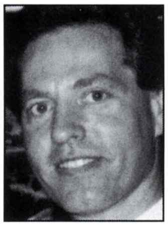
every day to diminish the opportunities of operators or make it much harder for operators to do business.

Is AMOA's trade show in direct competition with the Fun Expo, which serves the FEC market?

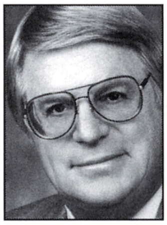


HESCH: No. I don't feel that way at all. I think the arcade operator, the FEC operator, and, of course, the street operator who is a member of AMOA will be at the AMOA show. I think there are different groups of operators who will be at each show. An interesting question to ask membership and registration at our show may be, How many FEC operators come to Nashville?



SENINSKY: No, I don't see AMOA and Fun Expo being in direct competition, even though some of the exhibitors overlap and some must choose between the two due to cost and time constraints. AMOA offers much for operators in the way of education, networking, and just plain having the opportunity to talk with manufacturers and suppliers about the coin-op industry. Fun Expo provides a great opportunity for FEC owners to do the same when it comes to the segments of their businesses but they cannot get the same level of service in the coin-operated segment as they could by going to AMOA.

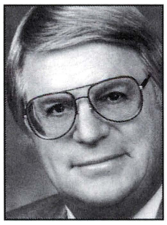
Is there a conflict for exhibitors looking at both shows?



HESCH: I don't know how that will play out. AMOA was criticized for having our show so late in the year last year because it conflicted with IAAPA. So we are trying to stay in September and now we have a conflict with Fun Expo. Who's right, who's wrong? I don't know. All I can say is we have our dates for three years out, and, of course, we have always been there. The AMOA is the organization that has taken care of everything that needed to be done in Washington for operators and tried to help the entertainment community to better itself. The mission of AMOA is to better the condition of the operator, be it a street operator, arcade operator, or FEC operator, through public relations or government relations, etc. You have to ask the question, "Who's doing the work in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere to promote the industry?" That's AMOA's basic function: to deal with problems operators face. Hopefully, the operators understand.

SENINSKY: AMOA is concentrating on what it does best, and that is to provide game operators with what they need to better run their business and learn about the opportunities that the near future will bring. There is no reason to duplicate what Fun Expo is doing. There is no reason to try to have a larger and larger show. For example, I have been going to IAAPA for more than 20 years and it is now so big that I don't even have time to cover it. There are so many people that it is very difficult to talk in detail with exhibitors. There is a proper size that is best for all concerned.

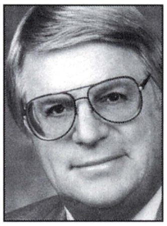
Has there been any talk of combining shows, or at least holding them concurrently?



HESCH: At this point, no, other than the fact that AMOA and AAMA have agreed to co-sponsor each other's show, which is a step in the right direction. Each believes there should be a spring and fall show. We have allied so we can help each other.

SENINSKY: The AMOA show is very important for this industry and will continue no matter what size it fits into. The money it generates is the lifeblood of this industry and it all goes back into services for the industry. Without it, the industry would greatly suffer, and I would hate to go it alone as an operator with zero support out there. AMOA and Fun Expo will be held in Las Vegas in 1999 very close together. This can only happen by chance because dates are hard to come by and there are some rules that apply such as shows of the same industry cannot be held within 30 days at a site without the permission of both parties.

Does the AMOA have any formal relationship with IAFEC?



HESCH: We have been working together as far as trying to cooperate on being pro-active on the video content issue. We have worked well together. Now it's a matter of getting the message out to all the operators. The problem AMOA has is we only represent 50 percent or less of the operators in the country. So it's very difficult to keep everyone informed. That's why we are working with AAMA and its distributor members and IAFEC. Also, all three organizations are working on this industry promotion program. I know we will continue to do well with them and hopefully some other things will come up that we can approach in a similar manner.

SENINSKY: I sit on the board of directors of both associations and enjoy the implicit trust which both have in my abilities and integrity. There are a lot of talented people at IAFEC and it has been my pleasure to introduce them to their counterparts on the AMOA board. And naturally they get along quite well. There are many areas where the two associations can greatly benefit each other. The success of the Parental Advisory Program hinges greatly on the working relationship of AMOA and IAFEC. They are both involved in the Industry Promotion Committee. By the way, AAMA is a big part of each of these relationships as well. All three associations are working very closely and only good things came come from that. ▲

IAFEC
VIEWPOINT

HAROLD SKRIPSKY

A LINE *drawn* IN THE SAND

The news headlines scream out about the tragedy in Jonesboro, Ark., another about a 14-year-old shooting a teacher, another about a group of kids who find a weapon in a drawer or closet, and another tragedy is played out again. It seems like human society is built upon or at least feeds upon the sensationalism of violence.

Sane people are revolted by these unexplained acts of violence. They want to know how this can be happening with ever-increasing frequency. Who's to blame for teaching our youth to act so violently? The movies? The media? The Internet? Home computer games? Arcade video games? Parental guidance or lack thereof? Governments and the atrocities some commit?

Q: Who decides which parental advisory disclosure message will appear on a particular game?

A: The manufacturer and/or developer of each games uses a coin-operated video game parental advisory system guideline that poses a series of detailed questions regarding the content of video game releases. By using this guideline, the manufacturer and/or developer is able to accurately identify the appropriate parental advisory disclosure message to be placed on each coin-operated video game.

All of the above or none of the above. Whatever the reasons may be, you can rest assured that our politicians are looking our way and we may end up being a scapegoat. Here are some of the reasons why I say that:

- Prior to Jonesboro—but stronger now—media headlines all over the country are questioning video violence and its effects on young people.
- You should be aware of the fact that U.S. Senators Joseph Lieberman

Overview of PAS

The industry associations, American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA), Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA), and International Association of Family Entertainment Centers (IAFEC) in close consultation with interested members of Congress and civic organizations, have developed and are in the process of implementing a coin-operated video game parental advisory system for coin-operated video games.

At the core of the system is all new coin-operated games carrying a parental advisory disclosure message informing consumers about the content of the game in either the artwork of the game or in a color-coded sticker affixed to the game header consistent with industry standards for size and location of the message. At the discretion of the video game manufacturer or developer, a disclosure message may also be included in the game's attract mode.

For several years, AAMA and AMOA have actively participated in industry coalition meetings and discussions, including those led by the Entertainment Software Ratings Board and the Software Publishers Association, on violence in video games and the structure of the competing rating systems for video games for the consumer market. Fundamental differences between the coin-operated and consumer segments of the video game industry (i.e. product development, marketing, cost, life cycle, packaging, venues in which games appear, player demographics, access by children, etc.) led AAMA and AMOA to develop this separate system for coin-operated video games.

As part of the system, AAMA and AMOA, together with IAFEC and IAAPA, have agreed to a landmark, industry-wide Code of Conduct that will help raise awareness of and compliance with the new system. In a further effort to ensure widespread implementation of the system, AAMA, AMOA, IAFEC, and IAAPA are collaborating on the development and implementation of a comprehensive Educational Program targeting manufacturers, developers, distributors, location owners, and operators of coin-operated video games.

From the information pack available from AAMA, AMOA, IAFEC, or IAAPA

Q: Why is the coin-operated video game parental advisory system necessary?

A: While many coin-op video games are suitable for play by children of all ages, some contain scenes of violence that some parents may not wish their young children to play. The trend in coin-operated video game development is toward development of games that are suitable for all ages and the coin-operated video game industry has put in place a user-friendly method to quickly ascertain the content of coin-op video games in the event parents wish to limit games played by their children.

and Herbert Kohl have taken a keen interest in our industry since 1993 and they are the primary reason the video game Parental Advisory System (PAS) is in place.

- You should also be aware that several foreign countries have totally banned arcade video game playing by people under 18 years old.
- You should also know that Florida recently introduced House Bill 3341 "Children Protection from Violent Acts" which will, if passed, prevent any person under 18 from entering any place of business that has violent video games. [Editor's note: The bill appeared to be stalled at presstime.)

I believe that Senators Kohl and Lieberman have drawn the line in the sand. A report must be presented to Congress on or before Sept. 1, 1998, on our industry's progress on PAS and on the "access-limiting measures" test that is being performed now by volunteer operators.

The report is very important for all of us, and we must all get behind the program now. As silly as this sounds, we really do want a great report card from the senators in September. The International Association of Family Entertainment Centers (IAFEC) has joined forces with the AAMA and AMOA to provide you with the information and tools necessary to implement the Parental Advisory System. The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) has also recently joined the effort.

The big question is: Do you want to PAS or fail? Should Congress accept our system for parental advising then that may be the extent of federal government influence. However to PAS we all must participate in the program, not just a few of us. We simply must make this program work. To fail is not a real option. Our industry may find itself regulated by legislation with stiff fines, penalties, and a disastrous reduction in our cash box collections. Strong regulation will lead to serious economic problems for those with large amounts of violent video games. It will also remove a segment of our guests to home video and other entertainment venues.

And what about potential new paperwork? Perhaps you feel that I'm over reacting, but for some reason my instinct tells me this isn't going away. The line is being drawn and I think I'll stay on my side this time. Help us all out and become proactive on the Parental Advisory System. Order your posters and stickers today. They are free! ▲

Harold Skripsky is president of IAFEC and takes that responsibility very seriously. Although he recently sold his Enchanted Castle family entertainment center to Ogden Corp., he remains active in the amusement industry and has a long-term advisory contract with Ogden.

LOOKING
For RANDY FROMM?
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IAFEC

Code of Ethics

As a member of the International Association of Family Entertainment Centers we have pledged to abide by its code of ethics and in so doing make the following promises to our customers, our employees, our community, and our industry:

1. To provide a clean, aesthetically pleasing environment for wholesome family entertainment and recreation.

2. To provide an environment where families can spend quality time together and have fun.

3. To put safety first and always provide a safe and secure environment for all customers and employees.

4. To make this facility an upstanding part of the community by exemplifying outstanding integrity and promoting respect for the family entertainment center industry as a whole.

5. To provide outstanding customer service and create an atmosphere that makes our customers feel safe, happy, and respected. To make every effort to meet our customers' expectations and cater to their needs. Both management and staff will endeavor to always keep our customers' satisfaction as our overriding concern.

6. To recognize our suppliers as our partners in providing excellent products and service, and to always deal fairly and treat them with respect and with the highest ethical standards.

7. To maintain good relationships with fellow IAFEC members and to remain active in the association for the advancement of the industry.

8. To promote our knowledge of the latest information in order to maintain this facility at the highest level of service to our customers, employees, and community.

9. To recognize our responsibility to the *community* in which we do business by always taking an active role in promoting its success and prosperity.

10. To recognize our responsibility to the *industry* we represent by always taking an active role in promoting its success and prosperity.

(Reprinted courtesy of IAFEC. Suitable for framing and placement within your establishment.)

IAAPA
INSIGHT

FEC Committee
looks at challenges ahead

BONNIE THEARD

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AMUSEMENT PARKS AND ATTRACTIONS' FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTER COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BEN JONES IS UPBEAT AND POSITIVE ABOUT THE BUSINESS OF PROVIDING FUN.

Jones, president of the strategic development and management firm RECreation Inc. in Oakbrook Terrace, Ill., heads an illustrious committee that includes Court Huish of Huish Family Fun Centers in Vista, Calif.; Chip Linville of Adventure Landing in Raleigh, N.C.; Elena Rouane of Enchanted Castle in Lombard, Ill.; Tim Sorge of Swings N Things Family Fun Park in Olmsted, Ohio; Timm Walsh of Funscape/Regal Cinemas in Knoxville, Tenn.; Terry Weerts of Celebration Station in Merrillville, Ind.; and Jose Luis Rocha of Wol-Ha in Cancun, Mexico.

"The committee is truly a slice of the industry," said Jones, who added, "I leave inspired and energized after every meeting because the conversation is so dynamic. Everyone really has their pulse on the industry, and some are quite visionary."

We caught up with the frequently traveling Jones before a spring committee meeting and asked about the challenges and rewards of being in the business of family fun, and how the committee views the current state of FECs.

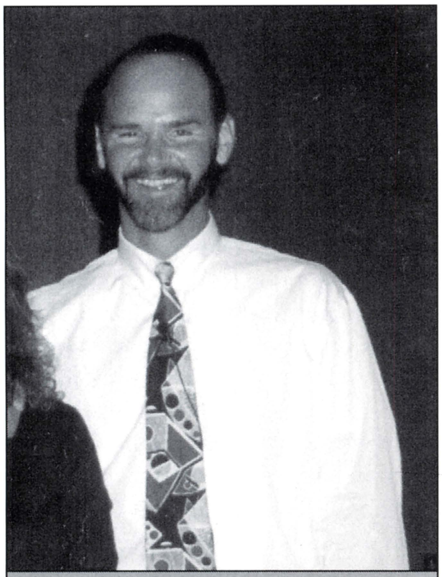
How long has the FEC committee been in existence, and how has it evolved?

When initially formed in the late '80s, it was a miniature golf committee and it has grown and changed along with the industry. In the early '90s IAAPA changed the focus of the committee to encompass what was then a fast growing segment of the industry.

Other IAAPA committees have changed as well, to respond not only to FECs but to the increased activities at museums and zoos, cinemas, and LBEs. Committees are made up of a more diverse mix of people from a greater number of businesses and industries. Overall, the dynamics are greater and the work IAAPA is doing is certainly reaching a much broader audience.

What project(s) is the committee undertaking that will help IAAPA members with FECs?

The committee is involved in projects well beyond the scope of FECs. It is real-



BEN JONES

ly focused on the industry at large and realizes that our segment is just that, a segment of a considerably larger, global industry. Our areas of focus are geared not only to our segment and the present-day, but we are also looking down the road at emerging trends and the directions we might take as a segment and as an industry constantly pushing and knocking on the door of new technology, exploring new ways of conducting business and partnering, and fostering good growth strategies in business development. I believe we are doing that for the good of the association and the good of the industry and its members.

One of the issues the committee is currently focused on is the extended school year and what we can do to have a positive influence on a shrinking season and shrinking labor market, and how we can take the availability of labor and do a better job training our young people to be able to go out into the work force into jobs that are beyond seasonal employment. Their experience in an FEC or amusement park can truly be a training ground that establishes good values and a good work ethic. We are working on ways to do internship programs and cooperative study programs so that our industry has more of a career path than it has historically.

These are things our committee is quite passionate about; we feel strongly that our group can make a difference and influence a much greater industry to take a look at these issues and carry them as important elements into the future.

We're also looking at ways of being community responsive and how the FEC can become an integral part of a community through participation with locally-sponsored events and tie-ins with the school board and community colleges and universities, so that the profile of our industry is raised such that we are not simply another operating business but are an integral part of the community and looked upon as having a strong social and moral conscience as well.

I believe that all of these goals are absolutely obtainable and not lofty. If they are lofty, then by design or by their very nature they are something that IAAPA and our committee has elected to pursue.

We're a business but we have to give back something to society. I don't think we are unique. I do think because we are entertainment and we are selling a service that is wholesome and geared toward the family and has other enriching components, it does set us apart from other types of businesses around the country.

Has the committee identified certain special needs of FEC owners and operators?

Some of the specific things we see are the continual increases in minimum wage that can have an adverse effect on profitability because the work force is predominately paid on an hourly basis.

Also, FECs are susceptible to weather and economic factors that contribute to a short season and low margins which combine to come full circle and limit some of our employment choices. We're working on ways to enhance our ability to track quality individuals and provide them with both a career path as well as an education path.

By education path I mean our industry can be a good training environment where employees can develop good skills and have experiences that will help them in their career of choice.

The association is reviewing rider responsibility and torte law reform. When you look at the issue of increasing costs it's difficult to separate the cost of manufacturing a ride, attraction, or game with the entire cost which is, How is it used and what is the exposure to the manufacturer and owners and operators in providing that ride to the public?

When you review cost you must look at the full spectrum and that includes rider responsibility, the court system, and litigation. Those are areas where IAAPA works through its government relations committee and legal round table. By partnering with other associations IAAPA is truly pushing for reform in areas that will ultimately have the net effect of stabilizing or reducing cost and exposure in our industry.

"Our industry is constantly pushing and knocking on the door of new technology, exploring new ways of conducting business and partnering, and fostering good growth strategies."

Safety, overall training, loss prevention, and insurance are focal points for the FEC committee. With proper training, design, and development, we can bring lower costs to the industry as well.

What percentage of IAAPA members are involved in FECs?

More than 45 percent of the entire membership is involved in family entertainment—that encompasses manufacturers, suppliers, and owners and operators.

I've always considered a location with at least three different types of attractions/activities to be an FEC. Is there a true definition of an FEC?

> *"The common denominator is an environment where individuals and families can come and have memorable experiences."*

There is no official definition within our committee. We've talked about it and found that to define it is to restrict it. When we talk about entertainment centers we have to take into consideration both the passive and active categories that encompass both leisure and recreational activities, and to define them would include children's entertainment centers, urban entertainment centers, and others.

Are we overanalyzing FECs by dividing them into so many categories?

Identifying and grouping types of centers helps in marketing and promotions, partnering and networking. We are coming close to overanalyzing by categorizing facilities as eatertainment, edutainment, education/retail, high-tech centers, etc. The committee has designed a strategy: we are entertainment centers and encompass indoor and outdoor facilities with man-made and natural attractions.

We like to think the common denominator is an environment where individuals and families can come and have memorable experiences. That is truly the bottom line. Whether it's shopping, eating, dining, playing, culturally enriching, socializing—if those are the things you do to entertain yourself, then we believe our responsibility as committee members and our association's responsibility is to embrace those areas and find ways to enhance the business for the owner and the experience for the customer.

As an industry we need to focus on creating well-rounded experiences. That may mean that we have to go outside our industry and find inspiration and ideas in other industries and learn from them so we can continue to bring great attractions and events to our guests.

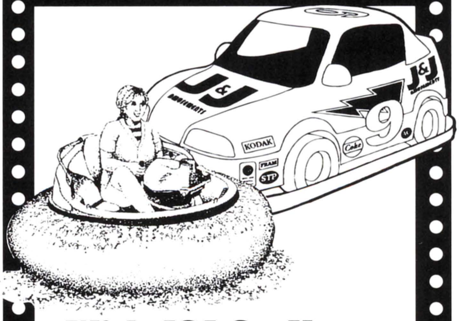
Not all FECs have been successful. Are there any common mistakes that contribute to a center closing its doors?

Misinformation that occurred in the early '90s contributed to an increase in the number of people looking at our industry. They began developing FECs without good strong historical data and statistically comparable data which led to a number of business failures.

Competitive forces were not truly understood. For example, the thought that competition had to be in the form of a similar product (another FEC). In entertainment, competition is in the form of discretionary income in consumer choices and behaviors. We are competing for the public's discretionary time.

It boils down to avenues of information. Limited amounts of verifiable information led to focusing on non-economic and certain intangible elements—the largest being the time commitment and dedication that it takes to actually operate a business in general plus the increased demands of an entertainment and highly customer-focused type of business.

ADD PROFIT!



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What advice would you give to someone considering opening an FEC?

Learn as much as you can. You can pass a test by cramming; but ultimately, if you want to excel, you will need to go back and really learn the material. When venturing into any business, and especially the entertainment business, there is no substitute for learning, truly understanding, and having a solid foundation on which to draw.

You need to read, attend trade shows, visit facilities, talk to owners and operators and go outside this industry and look at other kinds of businesses that are somewhat parallel and see what their pitfalls have been. Analyze what you see in common so you do not head in that same direction.

This is a fabulous industry. It's one of those things you have to feel passionate about it. You have to want to work with youth and be willing to put in a lot of hours in a concentrated period of time to find ways to make the business successful and prosperous. ▲

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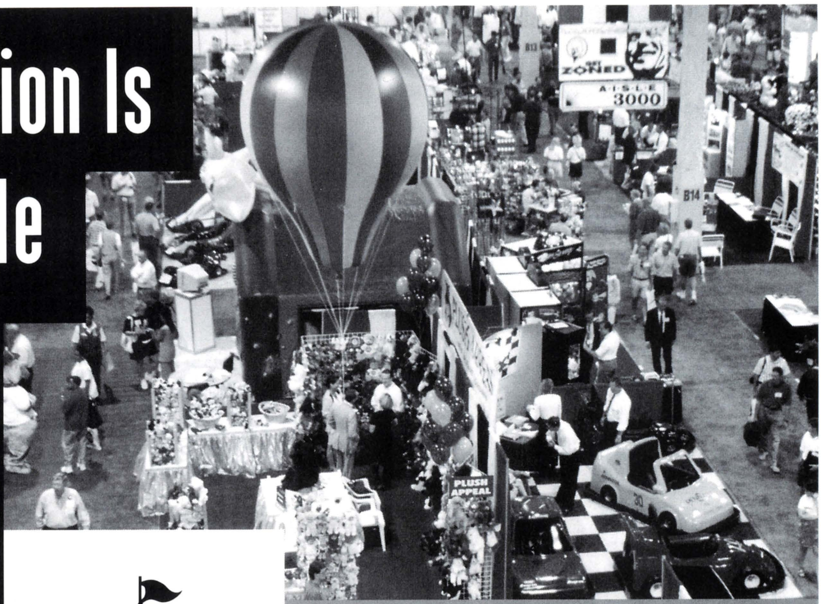

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ADD VALUE AND PERSONALITY

Michael Getlan is a third generation owner/operator of arcades and family entertainment centers and a member of IAAPA's Education, Technology, and Award Committees. He is director of operations for Amusement Consultants Ltd. of New Rochelle, N.Y., which operates 40 locations in 12 U.S. states and Central America, and is a frequent speaker at industry conventions. He can be reached at (914)576-7800; fax (914)576-6748, or via the Internet (http://www.amusementconsult.com).

The most important element a fundamentally undifferentiated business can bring to a customer is value. For that value to be appreciated by a customer it must be perceived. And creating opportunities for staff members to add value is an ongoing challenge for supervisors and managers operating game rooms.

Correctly operating equipment found in game rooms is essentially the same no matter where you play. Players are generally not aware of changes, except for the most obvious, such as the number of lives per game. So if the equipment is perceived as being the same, the real question is, "How can game room operators add value to their operations to create the perception of difference in the minds of their guests?"

Your staff has limited power in many areas of your operation, but tremendous power in this one. In most cases, the majority of staff members have no control over the kinds of games offered or the operating settings; limited influence on the types of merchandise; and, if trained properly, a great affect on customer satisfaction. Gaining a personal touch in your guest interactions is a great way to create a difference in a business that depends on technology for most of its marketing advantages.

Better facility

Your game room is based on high-tech equipment regardless of how up-to-date your equipment. Most game rooms, looking for that competitive advantage, try to stay as up to date as possible, driving up the technical component.

When dealing with a high-tech business, it is the high-touch approach that makes the difference. Allowing a little of your staff's individual personalities to show can help. Encourage them to work directly with guests whenever they can.

Operating a better facility than the next game room becomes a contest when the use of staff and the involvement and cooperation between staff members is a key factor. Cleaning the facility, stocking the redemption center, and numerous other daily tasks become easier when there is a sense of pride in the facility. Listening to suggestions from your staff members develops that sense of empowerment.

Those suggestions are especially important in the area of redemption merchandise. The front line staff members are close enough to the guests to know what merchandise is requested. Encouraging a staff member to order a piece of merchandise for a guest demonstrates trust in the staff. Providing the merchandise at a perceived value enhances your redemption operations.

Better service

The many daily interactions with guests provide a tremendous opportunity for great guest service and demonstrating personality. Encourage your staff to solve guests' problems quickly, and whenever possible, independently. People appreciate instant resolution.

Teaching guests how to play your equipment, giving refunds or change, and redeeming tickets, are just some of the daily tasks that require interaction with the guests.

When these tasks are done with a smile and a degree of personality, the experience is far more pleasant for the guest. There must be an environment of trust for this to occur, a feeling that the staff member can reach a little without being chastised for it.

There must be an encouragement of staff members to play a little with the guests, while stopping short of actually playing the equipment. We should not forget, and not let our staff members forget, that this is a business based on the guest having fun. A high score alone will not do it for most guests.

Better attitude

Get to know your staff. A simple concept but not as common in today's climate. In these times it may seem prudent to keep things impersonal, but the opposite is really true. To truly create a working team, it is important to get to know the members. Events that get your staff members together are a great way to accomplish this.

Staff parties, picnics, or movie theater outings are examples of this type of activity. A happier staff leads to happier guests, and the subtleties of their interactions speak volumes to the guest. A guest getting attention from a team feels important and will tell others how well he was treated. This type of word of mouth advertising cannot be bought and will be believed.

So, empower your staff, get them involved with the decision-making process, and instill a sense of pride in your facility. Let your staff present the best possible side of themselves and the facility, and allow yourself to get to know the members of your staff so that you will be more comfortable letting them show more of themselves. The personal touch is a great way to add value to your facility and the service that you provide for your guests. ▲

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Coinman

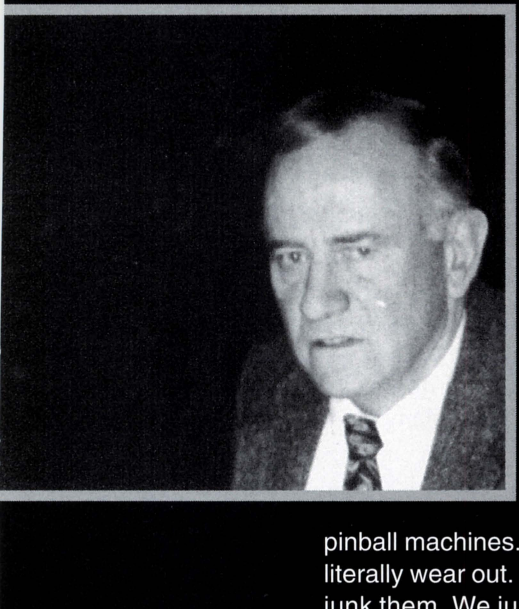
Dick George
Roy George Music & Vending

Dick George has been in the business over 40 years, following in his father's footsteps. But even before his dad started the company, his grandfather Louis George had a small route in Canton, Ohio, of pin tables that he operated as a sideline to his main business of selling ice cream.

Perhaps swayed by Louis's work in the coin-op industry, Dick's dad moved to Painesville, Ohio, in 1939 and started Roy George Music & Vending named after himself. Dick was just a youngster in those days but recalls his dad picking him up at school in the afternoon, bringing him to the office, and having him clean pin games and jukeboxes. But the job Dick said he vividly remembers more than any other was putting pennies in the cigarette packs.

"Let me explain," he quickly added, when he heard the puzzlement in my voice! And he did. When there was a price increase in cigarettes from 20 cents to 22 cents, they stuffed three cents into each pack. That way the customer could use a quarter in the machine and get his change in the pack of smokes.

It's stories like this that make you want to know more about Dick, his history, his company, and especially his thoughts on how the industry has evolved and where it's headed.



How long was it before you were handed bigger responsibilities than stuffing cigarette packs with pennies?

When I was about 16 I was able to drive the delivery truck. I tell my new people now that we didn't have the fancy trucks with liftgates like they do now. It was really all grunt work.

Do you remember some of the outstanding games?

It was obviously way before video. I remember when *Pong* came out, though. But before that there were ball bowling machines by United and Chicago Coin, alley bowlers, and pinballs primarily by Gottlieb. I laugh now when I think of the day they increased the price of a pinball machine to $500 because my dad said he was going to boycott!

Play was on a nickel and when I started driving I would sometimes do collections, counting all those nickels in the pinball machines. We would do $100 a week in nickels! But the playfields would literally wear out. We would run them until there was no playfield. Then we'd just junk them. We junked other equipment too. I can't believe it now but one time when we ran out of space in our warehouse, my helper and I took a bunch of old jukeboxes to the dump. When I look back it's unbelievable that we junked machines like Wurlitzer *1015*s and other collectibles now worth thousands of dollars. We never dreamed they'd be worth something.

–by Valerie Cognevich

Coinman

DICK GEORGE

What were your feelings when videos first came out?

We took it with a grain of salt at first. We weren't comfortable because they were electronic and no one in our service department knew how to work on them. We did consider the possibility that the video game industry would replace the pinball industry, or at least become as viable.

But it was about the time, within a few years, that the bumper pool table was replaced by Irving Kaye's regulation size pool table. We jumped all over that. Our equipment purchase dollars were stretched because we were trying to supply our locations with these new pool tables and getting our feet wet with video games.

Which game finally made you realize the impact video games would have on our industry?

That would be *Space Invaders* and a few years later *Pac-Man*. We saw that these games were revolutionizing the entire industry. We couldn't buy enough of them or buy them fast enough. It was not only satisfying our own customers, but we were getting calls from people in other industries that we never dreamed would be potential customers. The supply never seemed to catch up with the demand. Another revolutionary game was the wall game from Gremlin. Again, we couldn't buy enough of them. But there came a day when our collections dropped and they continued to drop. They went from $30 or $40 down to $5. We had the games stacked to the rafters. We ended up giving them as Christmas presents!

ROY
GEORGE
MUSIC
VENDING

Dick George with his son Rick

I guess this is where I learned a harsh lesson about R.O.I. It became clear to me that new equipment may be interesting, attractive, and profitable, but the staying power was important. It was a lesson I learned well. It's the same today, except you add a couple of zeros on the end of the price tag.

Everyone was on such a video game high. Did you get to a point when you felt like it wasn't going to last forever?

There were plateaus. We would see our income escalate as we purchased new games. But that run of equipment would level off and we'd see a profit because we were collecting but not spending. We could do that because there were at the most four top pieces each year. Now there are that many each week! Although we had to be selective about buying back then, it was nothing compared to how it is now.

What were some other significant milestones in the industry?

One of the most significant was the conversion from 78 rpm records to 45s. When I was a collector we would have to replace the 78 records because they would actually wear out. Dad had to make a decision whether to go to 45s. There was a big convention in Cleveland and Shaffer Distributing was exhibiting the Seeburg *Model A*. I remember it so well. Changing to 45s was a big transition for us in terms of equipment expenditure dollars. The change from 45s to CDs a decade ago was similar, but there was more time to make the transition. With 78s, they were making money one day and the next they were obsolete.

We have to remember that the industry has gone through a variety of changes and we have to make changes whether we want to or not. Some changes are easier than others, but all are going to happen whether you are there or not.

> **“We did consider the possibility that the video game industry would replace the pinball industry, or at least become as viable.”**

Because the music industry has made the two transitions, is it time for another with downloaded music?

I know it's out there and viable, but I haven't paid quite as close attention to it yet. I haven't talked to other veterans for feedback. What I know I've read in the magazine. But like I said, the industry is always changing and we have to be ready to change with it or we won't be around next time. I think it's entirely possible that the industry will embrace a new form of offering music to its customers; I'm just not sure what it will be.

You've been in the industry 40 years and must have an opinion about the major concerns in the industry now and how they compare to those many years ago?

I think concerns are parallel in terms of acquisition of equipment. Today it may be the newest, latest CD jukebox or high-tech simulator. But it's still a concern about how to pay for it. We had that same concern years ago. But then the risk wasn't as great because you could trade it back to the distributor. The days of the trade ended about 15 years ago. As close as I am to Ron Gold (Cleveland Coin) and Steve Shaffer (Shaffer Distributing), if I called and asked for a trade-in they'd probably laugh at me. We

Coinman
DICK GEORGE

have a home sale division with signage and we advertise our used equipment for home sales. We refurbish them and include a warranty. It's been excellent. Calls keep coming in. They want everything from ball bowling machines and jukeboxes to videos and pins.

Let's talk about the FECs. What has been your major role in working with them?

We have multiple movie screen locations, skating rinks, bowling centers, and some others. But basically we try to gear our equipment and rotation of equipment to various age groups. To do that we must have a clear understanding about who the FEC is catering to. For example, the average age in a skating rink might be 13 whereas in a bowling center it's near 18. We have to be very sensitive to that. Some FECs cater primarily to adults, some kids. It's up to us to know the clientele and gear the equipment to them.

Dick George with service manager Jim Stroud

Do you think there is a big difference in working with FECs and working with street locations?

Huge difference. Most FECs are much more sophisticated. For example, one of our FECs gets your magazine and the manager has the charts posted on his office door. The degree of sophistication is much higher; they know every aspect of their business. Placing equipment in FECs is different too We never line up 20 videos. We break it up. We might have a couple of videos, a *Full Court Frenzy*, a *Super Chexx*, and something else. We've experimented and we know that the more diversity we can offer the better the location does.

What if an FEC is adamant about what they want?

Every opportunity is different. I happened to think of a race track that is open 15 hours a day. When it allocated space for an FEC, we joint ventured it with the owner of the racetrack. He wanted to do the redemption and wanted us to do the non-redemption equipment. The problem with that is that you don't rotate the redemption equipment as often. It does need to be rotated, though. For instance, if we rotate our non-redemption every three months, he might rotate his redemption every nine months. But we agreed and we do all the service and collecting on both his and ours. It's a tradeoff , but it's worked out OK.

It would be better if we had all of the equipment. But it's difficult once they've got a taste of owning their own equipment. It's like locations that own their own pool tables. We end up doing the service. But we always tell them we'd like to operate all of the equipment, just like we tell our tavern owners we'd like to operate their pool tables. We also tell them that if some piece of equipment comes out that they don't want to buy, we'll buy it and operate it for them. Sometimes they realize the benefit of having us operate their equipment.

Have you ever had a complaint about violence or had to remove a game because of it?

I've never once had a problem. But I am very sensitive to it. We are catering to children and families and we'd be remiss not to make it a concern. We have parents dropping their children off so we must be sensitive to them. However, in all the years I've been in business it's never been a problem. Obviously, we are going to comply with the Parental Advisory System and will always be responsive to any complaints. I agree that our industry is a target when people are trying to figure out why kids go bad. But *Mortal Kombat* didn't pull the trigger. There certainly are other factors, and if the video game is named as a source it's a bad rap.

> **"It became clear to me that new equipment may be interesting, attractive, and profitable, but the staying power was important."**

Do you think the public's perception of our industry has gotten better over the years?

Yes, we have a much better image today and deservedly so. My peers in the industry are second, third, and fourth generation. My son Rick has been with me for 13 years. He's a graduate of John Carroll University and is a communications major. He's responsible for our sales and marketing and he does this on a very professional basis. I know it's a lot different than his great-grandfather's day and his way of doing business. I think you're seeing a new level of sophistication and we haven't given the public anything to point a finger at as far as the image. The only thing that might be an issue is the gray area games. Here in Ohio we've kept our nose clean. I feel comfortable with other professionals like doctors and lawyers, which I might not have felt 40 years ago.

Do you think that FECs have helped the image?

It's been a learning curve for the general public. We're showing them how much fun families can have together. We

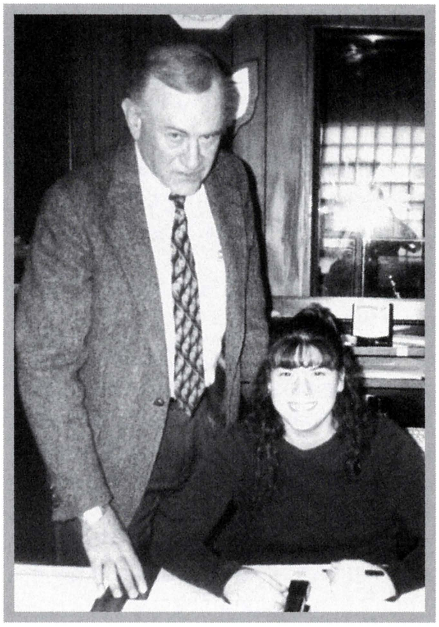
Coinman

DICK GEORGE

are providers of entertainment and it's no different than the movie industry, movie rental business, or sporting events. We're competing in the entertainment industry.

Have you seen smaller companies falling by the wayside and others getting larger?

It's definitely a trend in our industry. We've bought up a few smaller companies ourselves. If you look in the yellow pages now versus 10 years ago, the grouping is a lot smaller. I'd say there are less than half the companies there were 10 years ago. And I see that to be a continuing trend. Professionalism is one of the things that is dictating that. Also, deep pockets are necessary. As you know, the opportunities are there but they require enormous capital expenditures to take advantage of them. Professional staffing is another key. We are proud of our staff and they give us a competitive edge. I see the trend and it wouldn't surprise me in 10 years to see half the companies we have now. Fewer but larger is the trend.



Dick George with his secretary Lynnette Nagle

How do you perceive the future of the FEC segment of the industry?

It's here to stay. Our preference is to be a part of an FEC that incorporates other attractions besides equipment. It somewhat defines our niche in the business. I've had good and not so good experience in trying to open an FEC from ground zero. But we've had such positive experiences providing the equipment as part of an overall entertainment complex. But each operator has to find their own niche within the industry. ▲

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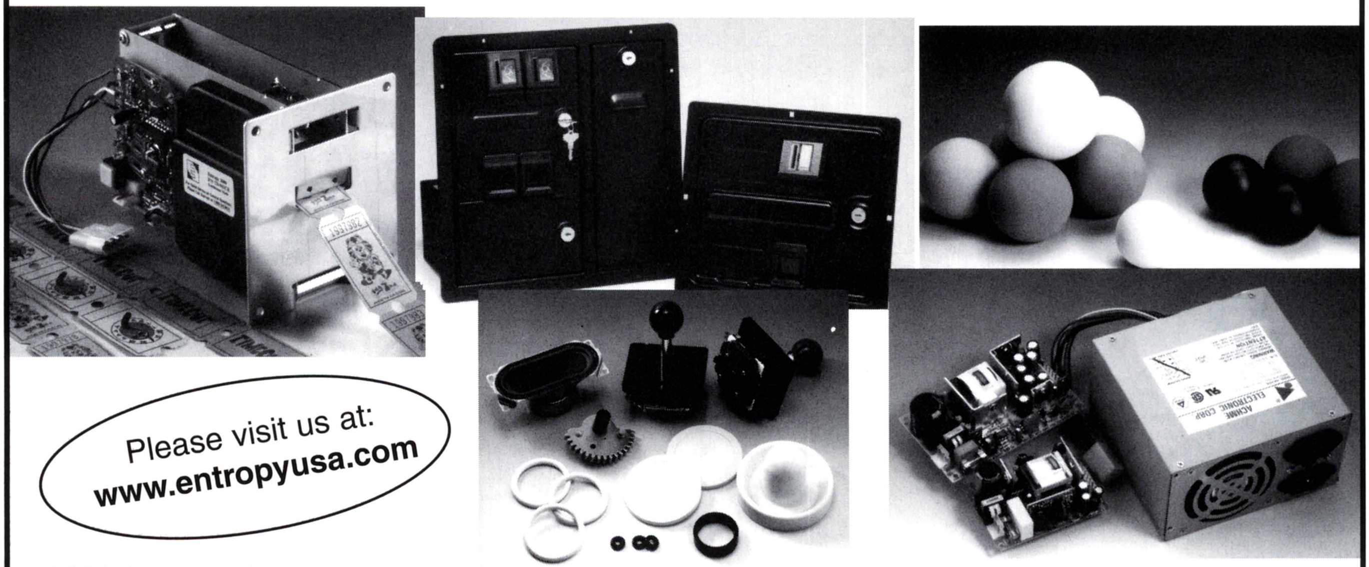

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OFF
THE RECORD

We asked operators to give us their opinions on the FEC market. Here is what they had to say...off the record.

IT'S ONE BIG INDUSTRY

It's funny that you ask me about the FEC industry because I was just talking about it with another operator. Everyone seems to think that it's another industry when it's really an extension of the coin machine industry. It reminds me of the early days of video games when everyone referred to our industry as the video game industry. There was more to it then and there's more to it now.

There were a lot of people looking at all the choices in equipment and attractions and they decided to combine them under one roof. You know how Las Vegas just keeps building and building new, grander casinos and hotels? It's the same with us but on a much smaller scale and with another big difference. Las Vegas seems to be able to support each and every place built with no problem. It's not like that with our industry. While everyone wants to outdo the next guy, there are many that haven't made it and just as many more who won't make it.

Way too expensive

I'm shocked that any family today can afford what it takes to spend even half a day in one of the FECs I've seen lately. I visited some when I was on vacation and although I knew it was expensive I was blown away. It's got to be the main reason so many have closed. The ones that will be here tomorrow must have deep pockets. I've been in this industry for a long time and have seen a lot of changes, but FECs have had a bigger impact than some other things. One thing has been the image of our industry. FECs get people thinking family instead of teenage juvenile delinquents. Maybe I shouldn't say that because the industry has been getting a bad rap from those who think only teenagers play games. But what I mean is that FECs are bringing parents and grandparents into an environment of games and they are getting a chance to see what we've known all along—games are fun. But the concern I have is that the fun is going to simply be too expensive for the typical family.

Best thing since sliced bread

FECs have been the shot in the arm this industry needed. The money poured into providing fun and entertainment to the masses has never been higher. Look at Dave & Buster's and Sega GameWorks. These places have seen beyond kids and envisioned offering older folks the fun in surroundings they can appreciate. I get so sick of people complaining about how many places have closed and making that the gauge of how the industry is doing. So what if places close, it only goes to prove that you have to know this industry to become a vital part of it. For every FEC that closes, usually because the planning was flawed from the beginning, there is another location that is doing a tremendous business. We're all benefitting from the success of the few.

FECS ARE FALLING BY THE WAYSIDE

I'm not really in the FEC industry so you may not feel that what I have to say is relevant. However, I've been observing the evolution in FECs and find it interesting. As more people thought they had designed the better mousetrap, manufacturers beefed up production and put their game designers on overtime to come up with a whole lot of equipment specifically for these places. It seemed to me as a street operator that we were a forgotten lot.

But in the long run I think manufacturers started bumping themselves in the rear of each other as the train of demand for redemption equipment diminished. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that there's only so many redemption games that can be sold and once places start closing their doors, those who are in need of those kinds of games have a huge choice in used equipment with hardly any miles.

The FECs that survive the inevitable shake-out are going to be better than ever because they've learned valuable lessons from those who didn't.

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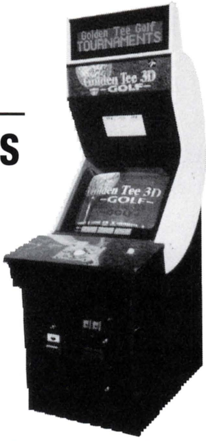

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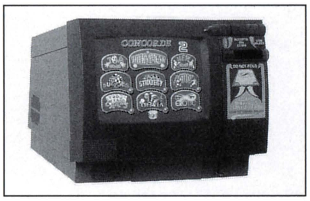

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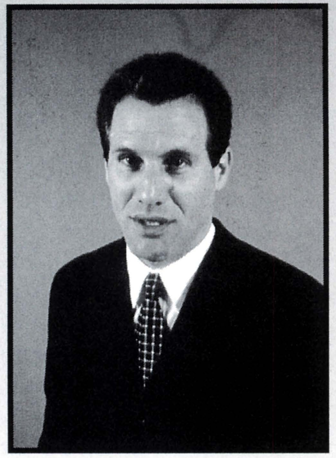
STEVE WHITE

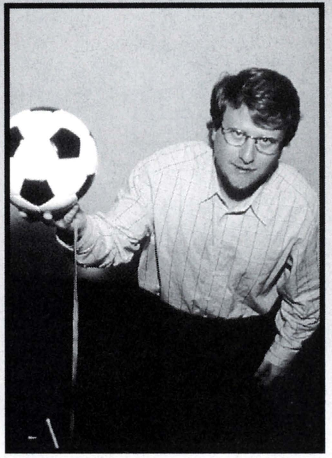
Amir Rubin could well be described as the poster child for capitalism near the end of the 20th century. It's easy to trust him, when the CEO of video game startup Interactive Light and co-founder of the newly formed PC game publisher Coinsoft says in earnest: "I am a great believer in competition."

Rubin is well versed in modern technology and current consumer trends while also possessing the consummate skills of an expert businessman able to forge unique coalitions between investors, innovators, and imperial powers.

What he is not is a prophet in the wilderness, preaching to a mere handful of the converted. It is easier to see him as a miracle worker who as a virtual unknown was able to enter many often-closed doors in the coin-op industry, while at the same time introducing the concept of arcade games based on PC technology, all before the giants of the computer industry-Microsoft and Intel-came 'a calling.



Amir Rubin, CEO of Interactive Light and co-founder of coin-op PC game publisher Coinsoft.



Stuart Wallock, vice president of marketing and business development.

Chuck Morton recently joined as vice president of U.S. coin-op sales.

Rubin's business career began when he left Tel Aviv University and traveled to Colombia to enter business school where his uncle served as a professor. While waiting to enroll, he started a publishing venture that produced fairy tales on books and cassette tapes. He now heads up Interactive Light, which lays claim to over 80 investors, some of them major financial players, and is talking about a public offering in the not-so-distant future.

"Interactive Light is unique in our industry; they understand the convergence of two trends: firstly the move toward PC-based interactive games and secondly the aspect of play that needs to be physical and interactive rather than simply electronically interactive," said Steven Warsh, president and CEO of Playdium Entertainment, a company which operates and develops cutting edge entertainment facilities in Canada.

Interactive Light introduced its first coin-op video game, the batting simulator Home Run Derby, at the 1996 ACME show in Orlando, Fla., and has never looked back since.

The company followed that title with an upgrade, Pitcher's Duel, that transformed the game into a two-player attraction and introduced a new mode of game play (i.e. the ability to both hit and pitch.). At IAAPA they literally kicked it up a notch, presenting their soccer simulation game Kick-It, and the ASI show earlier this year saw a reintroduction of their popular baseball game. The newest version, Swing-It, features a smaller footprint, upgrades to the batting cage, Louisville slugger theming, and new software featuring added instructional screens and advanced graphics.

Along the way the company has evolved as a sales and marketing organization, working with many industry mainstays and recently taking over its own direct sales efforts to distribution and adding sales veteran Chuck Morton to its growing staff.

"Luckily we have good relations with all the local distributors and international distribution; we are forming a board of advisory that will include friendly distributors," said Rubin. "Because we are developing PC products it is very important that we have input from the market. We are working with operators and distributors to bring in their thinking about our product before we invest millions of dollars."

Interactive Light has enjoyed a close relationship with H. Betti Industries almost from its inception as a video game manufacturer, with H. Betti showcasing early versions of the company's product at trade shows. H. Betti is still one of the company's key distributors for the South American market, as is game manufacturer Innovative Concepts in Entertainment (ICE) in the Middle East.

ICE had served as an exclusive supplier of Interactive Light products in the United States, the Middle East, and the Pacific Rim until recent months. The company's games are handled exclusively by Cromptons Leisure Machines Ltd. in Europe.

The European market, where soccer is widely popular, has been pivotal for Interactive Light's recent sales efforts. In fact, a large majority of the first wave of Kick-It production units produced by Advanced Mfg. & Development for Interactive Light were shipped directly to Cromptons, leaving only scattering of samples for the United States and other markets. But that situation has been remedied, and the game has found favor with many players outside of Europe as well.

In the future, Interactive Light plans to introduce additional products to its line of sports simulation games, offering players everything from bowling and hockey to basketball and football and giving operators the chance to choose between high-end, LBE-style pieces or more affordable units designed for street locations and smaller arcades.

A January 1999 release is also being planned for Kick-It 2. It will be available in a new size and as a software only upgrade for existing Kick-It units. Game play will feature target kicking and a wall of defenders to compete against. "Kick-It operators will have a brand new game," explained vice president of marketing and business development Stuart Wallock. "They will have Kick-It and they will have Kick-It 2."

As part of its efforts to introduce PC-based arcade games, Interactive Light has also partnered with H. Betti Industries in the formation of Coinsoft, one of a new crop of publishing companies looking to bridge the gap between the consumer game and out-of-home entertainment industries, thus providing more content for a PC-based arcade game platform. Coinsoft's first product will be a dinosaur themed fighting attraction, currently being referred to under the working title T-Rex, which was developed by Angel Studios.

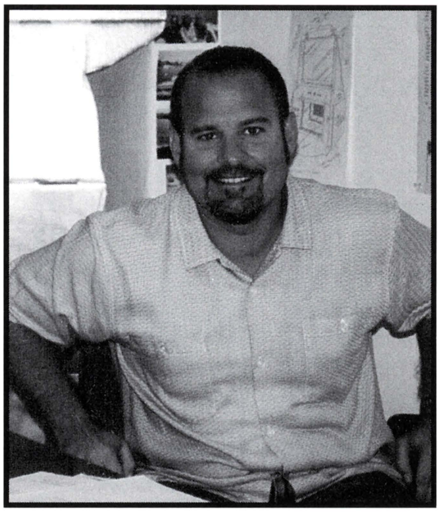
The road not taken

While Interactive Light finds itself well positioned for the future, it's an opportunity richly deserved and grounded in years of strategic planning and not-so-strategic shifts in technology and market trends. After launching his publishing business, Rubin began seeking a channel for wider distribution of his products. One day he simply picked up the phone and called the chairman of Toys R Us.

"He tried to get rid of me and I said, 'Look, if you don't want to help me just say so,'" Rubin recalled. "Finally, he said, 'I like your style, let me put you together with my right hand man,' Howard Moore, the executive VP of merchandising worldwide. They gave me the first order, and that's how I started."

After selling his publishing company to a partner in 1989, Rubin started a traditional toy and game company with Doug Schiller, who is now the chief financial office at Interactive Light, and Art Sherman, currently vice chairman of Interactive Light. Through the first years of this decade, the company sold toys and games to Toys R Us and other large retailers and licensed game ideas to major toy manufacturers.

It was during this period that Moore, who is still on Interactive Light's advisory board, gave Rubin a crucial piece of advice: find a niche that capitalizes on the current trend in interactivity and leave the low-tech toy business to the big boys. That sent Rubin on a buying venture in 1991, purchasing a company in Israel that had produced unique 3D sensing technology-technology now at the core of Interactive Light's games.


Coin-op veteran Jeff Walker is the vice president of product development at Interactive Light.

Helping finance that purchase was electronic engineer-turned investment banker Cliff Friedman of Bear Sterns, a high-tech visionary who invested in Netscape in the early years and has written seminal books on new technology media. "His help allowed us five years of pure research and development," credited Rubin.

Rubin moved the company's engineers to the United States, first to New York and later to California in a search for new talent. In southern California, the company was able to draw from a pool of downsized engineers let go by the giants of the aerospace industry. At that point, the company officially changed its name from MVP Games to Interactive Light.

Rubin credits Reza Miremadi, senior vice president of research and development, for much of the technical work that took place from there. "He is the genius who took the raw technology which was used for military purposes and developed a real application," Rubin explained. "Under his supervision, we hired many more engineers with specialties in hardware, software, mechanics and electronics and built a very strong team. From 1991 through 1995 we were doing two things. I was raising money and the engineers were working on the core Smart Beam technology, which can detect movement in 3D space.

"We were thinking about consumer applications, safety and security for industrial use, and the infrared communications industry. Our technology can communicate 50 times faster than anything that exists today, and we will explore those fields in the future."

Ultimately the company's board of directors, which is comprised of bankers, Wall Street types, and other investors, advised entry into the entertainment industry which was seen as the avante garde or cutting edge of interactive technology. The goal, Rubin said, was to demonstrate the technology through "the merging of the physical with the virtual."

That decision prompted the formation of a new company, Immersia, in Israel to design software for Interactive Light, which was busy completing the hardware system. Israel was a prime market at the time because of the availability of experts in military simulation.

Not long after a primitive prototype that would become Home Run Derby was first developed, Rubin approached Bernie Stolar, who is currently president of Sega of America and was involved with the Sony PlayStation at the time in 1995. During that same period, Sony was looking to develop an arcade board, which was later used by Namco.

Rubin brought Stolar a primitive 2D baseball game with 3D sensors embedded in the home plate on his laptop, and Stolar was convinced. "He said to me, 'Let this be the first product using the Sony PlayStation arcade board,'" Rubin recalled. "Bernie also introduced me to his friend Peter Betti (chairman of H. Betti Industries), who was nice enough to come and look at the basic prototype. He had the vision to see what could be done with the game and brought in his executive VP of product development Jeff Walker. Jeff Walker came into our office and said, 'This is what the market needs. This is a refreshing product.'"

Walker was essentially placed on permanent loan to Interactive Light to help develop a product that H. Betti would then market. Initial PlayStation boards, not the final arcade board, were also provided by Sony, but the company realized they were not up to the task.

"But we decided that since we are the only company in the world with permission to use the specially modified PlayStation board, we actually went into IAAPA '95 with a PlayStation-driven unit," said Rubin. "We put test units in a number of locations and sold approximately 100 of these machines later the next year."

The following spring, Interactive Light was ready to sell its first generation Home Run Derby, but the company was still waiting for the finalized arcade boards from Sony. During ACME '96, Walker introduced Rubin and his engineers from Immersia to Kristin Montgomery and Ross Smith then of 3Dfx Interactive. Montgomery and Smith were showing a beta version of their new PC graphics board and talking about the possibility of developing games using PC technology.

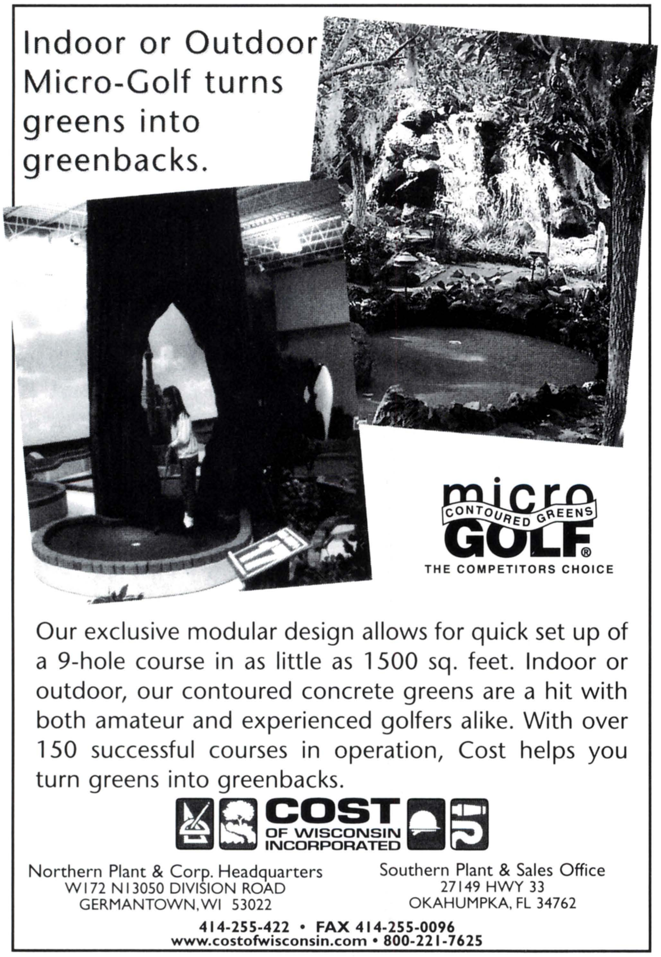
"We felt good about the 3Dfx team and their whole concept immediately," Rubin remembered. "At that point, we first saw the potential of moving to the PC. At the same time, Sony informed us that the PlayStation arcade board would be delayed for another six months. We were facing a major dilemma. We could not wait because the baseball season would be over. We needed to sell Home Run Derby on the PlayStation or we had to move to this new PC system with a 3Dfx accelerator."

The technical staff from Immersia were convinced, and a month later they had converted all the game software to the PC hardware. As a result of this, Immersia was also involved in the final debugging of the 3Dfx board. The resulting PC-based system was called Power Home Run Derby.

"The whole group from Immersia moved into the 3Dfx office for a month," said Rubin. "Immediately, we realized the ability to produce custom updates to the game. I was very skeptical that we would be able to move to the PC that quickly, but one beautiful thing about the PC is you can release a product and then update. We shipped the product and then later shipped locations more upgrades and customized logos."

Not long after the introduction of Home Run Derby, Interactive Light's strategic partner, H. Betti Industries began to refocus on its core distribution business and slowly dismantle attempts to manufacture games. As a result, Walker took a permanent position at Interactive Light, where he has since overseen all new product development.

IAAPA '96 saw the introduction of Pitcher's Duel, which allowed the second player to control both the speed and style of pitch through the use of a trackball interface. It also introduced a revolutionary concept to the arcade in-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ABC

The company recently introduced Swing-It, an updated version of its popular baseball simulator.

Swing It
MARINERS
ENTER
PUSH

dustry, according to Rubin. "It's the first time in the history of coin-op that a software-only upgrade was presented. Pitcher Duel's featured a two-player upgrade to Home Run Derby and a promotional with Louisville Slugger called Tournament Edition. We shipped a CD to the customers allowing them to put a whole facelift and tournament on the game."

Surprisingly, this process was taking place prior to the first summit meeting in December 1996 between the powers-that-be in coin-op and representatives of PC-giants Microsoft and Intel, who had recently begun evangelizing the use of PC technology in out-of-home video game attractions.

The revolution will be on PC

Rubin invited coin-op distributors Dave Patterson of Sunbelt Amusement and Peter Betti to that very meeting, asking them to support this new arcade initiative.

"I told them, 'We need your help; we are tiny company and we have a very big game to sell,'" he said. "On top of that Interactive Light now had to sell the whole coin-op industry on the PC. It was too much. We couldn't afford that. As we came up with more games, we needed distributors and operators to support the PC and more companies to come to the market with PC product."

More PC-based coin-op product would prompt operators and technicians to focus on the PC as a game platform and open the door to more customers. The irony, according to Rubin, is that his success is in some ways tied to that of his competitors.

"A lot of people came out of that meeting realizing this project was going to take a lot of work," Rubin continued. "The language Intel and Microsoft were speaking was so different. They could not communicate to the coin-op industry what they were thinking and didn't really know this business. Not long after that, I told Peter, 'Intel and Microsoft can be great for the PC coin-op initiative, but they can also kill it. If they continue to scare the industry, we are going to have a much harder job."

This prompted initial discussions about the formation of a publishing company that would become Coinsoft. Rubin offered his company's two years of knowledge from the technology wilderness to help produce a scaleable PC game platform that would see quality titles move from the LBE market down to street operators and ultimately the home when their earnings fell off.

"Coinsoft will be a publisher of coin-op games," Rubin declared. "It will never deal with cabinets, never sell cabinets. Interactive Light has already designed a universal cabinet and it will put them out on the market and be the exclusive distributor for the original Coinsoft product T-Rex."

But that's jumping ahead in the story, according to Rubin. None of this could have come to pass without another key element—the development of a coin-op tool kit that bridges the technology divide between an arcade game's set of controls and the PC that will drive content within those game boxes.

The development of the company's current soccer title Kick-It became the working laboratory for this technology, which combines the basic building blocks and knowledge put together by Immersia on the software side and Interactive Light in the world of hardware.

"These are the basic building blocks that will allow Coinsoft to be a content driven publisher," Rubin said. "Now you can have a game software company like Angel Studios working with Immersia using all the technologies it has developed over the last two years."

Praising the PC

Tip O'Neal, longtime Speaker of the House, once quipped that all politics is local by way of commenting on the powerful connection people have to the familiar. That force in human nature has helped drive the success of Interactive Light's PC-based products, allowing the company to craft each play experience individually.

"We had the advantage of taking something to the marketplace that we could customize for a specific venue with very few complications," explained Wallock. "For example, the baseball game was perfect for Major League Baseball. We had the opportunity to start with the Atlanta Braves, who had just won the Series. They purchased two units for their new stadium, Turner Field, and wanted something special. We put customized billboards and signage throughout the virtual stadium by simply inserting a floppy disc with the upgrade. The computer does all the work."

Wallock said there are more than 20 major and minor league teams that are utilizing the company's baseball games in similar ways.

"They all take advantage of this customization as do the arcades like Dave & Buster's with their own logos or customization," he said. "This can also be sold as advertising within an arcade. People are already doing it. There is a sports bar up in the Chicago area that had its Miller beer distributor buy a billboard and the distributor paid good cash for it. This can be done after the fact and sold over and over and over again without removing the unit from the location."

In fact, Interactive Light's vision for the future includes a number of innovative revenue sources made possible by the PC including downloaded advertising and linking players in the home with competitors in the arcade for a premium play charge.

Interactive Light is also using the PC's potential to protect its own business interests, installing special graphics through a dongle that will mark each game and to whom it was sold, and providing specialized game play and language features for international markets.

"The PC is an open and friendly system," said Rubin. "We did not have to spend the millions and billions of dollars building the hardware and the operating system. Intel is doing an amazing job working with us and putting a whole line of PCs at our disposal that are much better for the coin-op market. It's called the NLX System. It will be easily upgradeable and should allow you to keep the same PC in the market for five years."

Such developments in hardware will also help manufacturers like Interactive Light, which had to upgrade the PC in all of its units-at its own expense-when Pitcher's Duel was first introduced. "Now Pitcher's Duel is doing great and it's a platform that will be able to take more upgrades," Rubin noted. "Hopefully, in the future the games out there will allow the locations to go online and, through upgrades, players will be able to compete against other competitors in the home. The home player will have to pay for the time they play and that will go into operators' and distributors' pockets. That's why we need more publishers and more games because it's hard to pitch locations on getting an ISDN line and getting online."

Unfortunately, some developments in hardware technology have been less forthcoming from the PC and/or coin-op industries. "The bottom line," said Rubin, "is Interactive Light needs to put together the Game Control Interface (CGI) card for the market because others are trying to charge too much money. We are going to be offering a basic coin-op kit, and Frank Happ will sell the whole package. Hopefully, it will be available for the AMOA.

"I would not allocate my engineers' time to do this if I didn't have to," Rubin continued. "I don't see a choice. Under normal circumstances, I might keep all the technology to myself and let my competitors waste two years like we did. But the result will be that I will have to keep educating the market about the PC, and I don't get online locations and PC-trained technicians. We are going to release the GCI card and a basic toolkit for a small markup that will run all standard coin-op peripherals."

An open system

This spirit of cooperation is, in fact, a hallmark of the idea behind an open platform and the business philosophy of both Interactive Light and Coinsoft-that an increase in content grows the market exponentially, creating a bigger pie for all.

That is why Rubin's company is also the first to step forward and commit to the introduction of a truly open game system (i.e. cabinet, computer, monitor, etc.) that will run software not necessarily sold by his or affiliated firms.

"The cabinet will be open to any developer's software and not necessarily software sold through Coinsoft," Rubin pledged. "This model will be similar to the current situation in which operators can buy a cabinet and put any kit they want into that cabinet. As a result, we are going to sell 10 times more game cabinets than anybody else because our cabinet will offer operators the most variety of future titles to choose from. Why would you buy a cabinet if the software can only come from one company? We don't want operators to be a slave to our company."

In the same breath, Rubin promised to level the playing field for distributors and said that despite its partnership role in Coinsoft, H. Betti Industries' distribution arm Betson Enterprises would enjoy no preferential treatment in terms of product pricing or availability. Intel, he said, has made it clear that it will not participate in any initiative that gives special treatment to one distributor over another.

Where Coinsoft will be bullish in its advocacy is promoting the coin-op industry be it in the arcade, FEC, LBE, or street location, Rubin said.

"Coinsoft is not going to allow the release of a product for the coin-op market to be released for the home for six to 12 months; it will all depend on the platform," he declared. "A game released on 450 MHz, which doesn't work with anything less than that, is not that big of a deal because there's no installed base in the home. If it's released for 100 or 133 MHz, I have a big problem with that unless you want to pay the operator for advertising your game. Don't expect to charge the coin-op industry for advertising your game.

"Right now it's very hard," he continued. "Consumer software companies don't quite understand our industry. They only see small quantities and it's hard for them to see the potential. So I say, 'OK, let's wait. We are going to show you what can happen when a game can sell millions of units after being a success in coin-op.'"

In fact, the consumer game industry needs only look at the success of many titles in the home as a result of their popularity in the arcade including the Street Fighter and Mortal Kombat series of games and any number of hits from Sega and Namco to understand the philosophy behind Coinsoft.

"It may sound like I am preaching, but a lot of consumer product really sells because of the licensing or the way it's packaged. A product that passes the test of coin-op, will be a great product on all platforms," concluded Rubin. "Between Interactive Light and Coinsoft, I hope to see the PC initiative catching on with other companies. It's going to be good for the operators, distributors, and the whole market. It's going to make it possible to bring in new sources of revenue."

That's a big promise to deliver, and one cannot help but wonder if it's sales hype or salvation from whence Rubin speaks. But ask him again, and you get that same confidence exuding from the man who really is the best evangelist the Arcade PC movement has, someone who has actually put the idea into practice from the ground up. ▲

SPECTACULAR turnout in Philadelphia for Betson

In keeping with the tradition of hosting an open house for its customers, Betson Philadelphia put on an event April 4. General manager Irv Spinak was delighted with the turnout. "We had a spectacular turnout of approximately 500 people," he exclaimed.

He added that the new games are drawing attention. "Enthusiasm for the games was high. We needed that," he said. Guests also enjoyed a terrific buffet, won an array of door prizes, and according to Spinak, "a good time was had by all!" ▲

Atari's Tom Keil (r) chats with Champion's Coin's Eric Ash (c) as another group watches a youngster play a new game.

Betson's Bob Dipipi (l) with Joe Baldassari of American Amusement and his daughters Gina and Elizabeth and girlfriend Kathi.

Merit's Dan Aymar (r) talks business with Jimmy and Pam Acardi of Jimmy's Vending Service.

Betson's Bob Dipipi (l) with Penn Vending's Mike and Heidi Bershad and their adorable son Max.

Betson's Irv Spinak (r) with Ron Baum (l) of Williams and Bob and Donna Moyer of Aardvark Amusements.

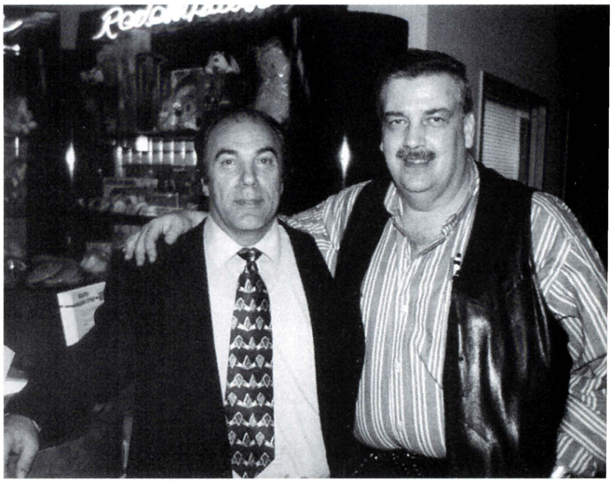
A record crowd at
BETSON N.J.

Betson Enterprises in Carlstadt, N.J., hosted an open house on April 8. The ASI Expo, just two weeks prior to the open house was chock full of new products to meet the demand for new equipment. The record turnout at Betson seemed to indicate that operators are eager to see what the manufacturers have to offer. "The factories really did their homework this year," noted sales manager Joe Beston. "We look forward to a very robust spring buying season." ▲

Above: Betson's Mike Volpitta (r) with Jim Newman of Newman Bros. in front of Midway's latest pinball, *No Good Gofers.*

Above: Howard Preshel of CMG Vending by Benchmark's *Claim Jumper.*

Below: Betson's Vince Ghibenti (l) with Richie Haines of Vending Distributors.



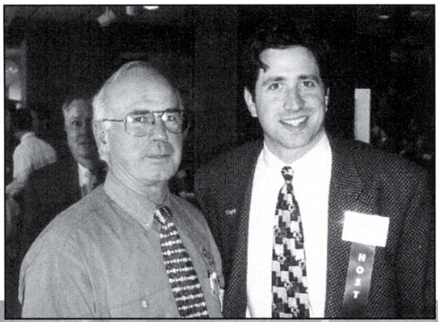
Lieberman hosts 500 in Bloomington

The Thunderbird Hotel in Bloomington, Minn., was the location for Lieberman Music Co.'s open house, held April 8 just two weeks after the Amusement Showcase International Expo in Las Vegas. Attendees enjoyed a full day of seminars, amusement and vending shopping, and lots of prize raffles.

It was the first time that both the vending and amusement divisions held their open houses at the same time and over 500 guests proved it was a great idea. "Our Milwaukee office has a tremendous turnout at its amusement/vending show every August, so we felt it was a natural for the Minneapolis office to give it a try," explained Hal Lieberman. He added that it was a lot of work. "Our shop/service crew, Linda Winstead, and Brian Aune did a tremendous job setting it all up," Lieberman concluded. ▲

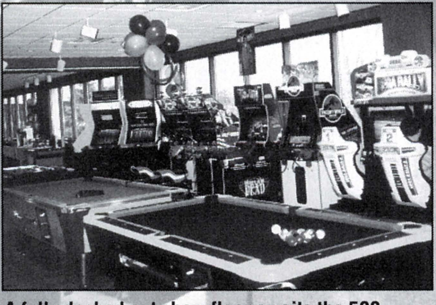
From left: Doug Smart of Northern Amusement, Bob Stolp of Jim's Game Supply, and Sany Zeglin of Lieberman talk shop.

Dianne Rassmusen and Brad Coubal of Northwest Coin.



Hal Lieberman (r) welcomes Clyde Knupp of AM Vending.

Arachnid's Marcio Bonilla (r) explains the finer points of *Black Widow* darts to D&R's Mike Hawkins.



A fully decked out show floor awaits the 500 guests.

World famous landmark HOSTS NBVA '98

This year's National Bulk Vendors Association (NBVA) Convention was held at the famous Hotel Del Coronado (affectionately nicknamed the "Del"). It is located on the Pacific Ocean across the bay from San Diego. Built in 1888, it has been the setting for some unforgettable movies like the Marilyn Monroe, Jack Lemon, Tony Curtis classic, "Some Like It Hot."

The April 29-May 2 gathering promised to be, and definitely was, the largest in the association's history. While once considered an industry separate from the traditional coin machine business, it's not any more. Today coin operators are looking at bulk vending as a way to augment their existing routes. NBVA president Robert Folz of Folz Nuts said at the beginning of the show, "Our attendance for this gathering should break all records." He was right.

Attendees were impressed with the comradery among everyone from exhibitors to operators, and the industry veterans wanted to make certain the newcomers felt welcome. In addition to new-member orientation the first day just prior to the exhibits opening, there was also a special new-member breakfast the following morning.

One thing no one complained about was not having enough to do. The weekend was jam packed with activities, both at the convention and on-your-own. The show began with a golf tournament sponsored by Kid Zone and Toy 'n Joy at the gorgeous Eastlake Country Club. There were manufacturers and operators enjoying the friendly competition side by side.

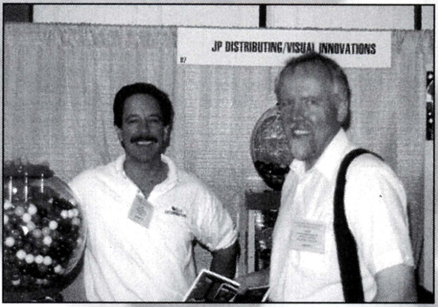
There were nearly 50 exhibitors displaying their wares which included a vast array of products. Exhibitors, both new and experienced, were impressed with the turnout. Operators got a rare opportunity to view a cross section of bulk vending products from gumball machines and sticker machines to merchandise and software.

SEMINARS

A highlight of the weekend was five informative seminars, the majority of them drawing over 100 attendees. Topics included "Profitability: Profit is Not a Dirty Word," with Scott Braverman of Kid Zone; "Toy Distribution Issues: Product Availability," with Neel Clark of Kid Zone; "Internet: What is Cyberspace," with Jon Becker of Toy 'n Joy; "Growing Your Business; Vertical Rather Than Horizontal," with NBVA president Roger Folz; and "Electronic Entertainment Bulk Vendors," with Alex and Greg Malavazos of Quick Silver.

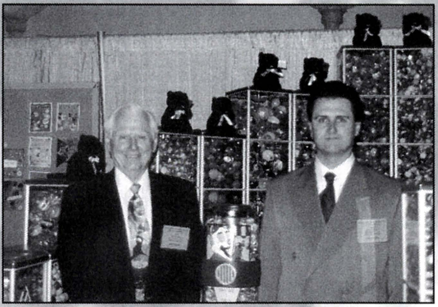
A few tidbits from the seminars included Scott Braverman urging operators to increase their split with locations and to work with contracts. He noted that many are now working with self-renewing contracts that are self-explanatory. However, one New York operator informed the group that self-renewing contracts were not binding in his state.

Operators Larry and Bella Best with Hugh Davis (c) of Creative Products.


Jim Chapman (l) of J.P. Distributing talks with British operator David Patrick-Brown.

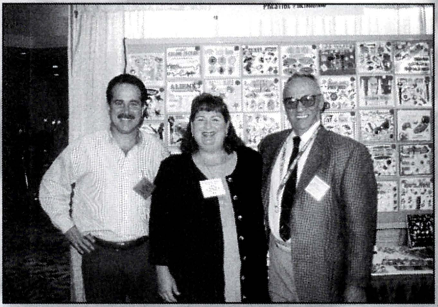
Michelle Smith and Tim McCarty of Global Gumballs in Alabama show off their new unit, the *Illusion*.

From left: John Lander and Gene Allen of Swell Confections with operators Johnny and Margaret Derczo of Texas.


Pictured in the Machine-O-Matic booth are Ken McPhail (l) and his son Greg McPhail.

Operator Steve Friedman (c) poses with Peninsula's Chuck Clark (l) and John Nashed.

Jim Plescia (l) and Larry Fineman of Impulse Amusements.


From left: Frank LaVecchia, Jr., Lenore Fromm (wife of Play Meter's exclusive technical writer Randy Fromm), and Alfred Lafata of Prestige Premiums.

Brian Carasik of Kiddie Rides USA with the company's *Musical Gumball Machine*.

Neel Clark of Kid Zone opened his session with a joke: "Vending is like a kiss—location, location, location!" Jerry Clothier of A&A Parkway spoke of forecasting what's hot in merchandise and gave hints on keeping things available in your warehouse. Clark quoted the late Art Gold, a well-known bulk vending operator who said of buying merchandise, "You never want to be the first guy in or the last guy out."

Peter Becker of Toy 'n Joy had some words of wisdom about buying merchandise from overseas. He noted that the industry is supposed to be protected under GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). For the bulk vending industry it means no taxes on imported goods. Otherwise, he explained, this merchandise wouldn't be profitable.

Alex Malavazos cautioned operators to check all their equipment for UL standards and liability exposure; have the locks and the tilt stability tested. He stressed that you want to buy from a manufacturer that carries liability insurance. In his seminar about one-third of the attendees already had electronic bulk vending equipment and another third were are looking to buy them. Greg Malavazos suggested making a utility tool box with a power supply, microprocessor, light bulbs, and a testing meter. He also emphasized that you should buy from a company that responds to your needs promptly.

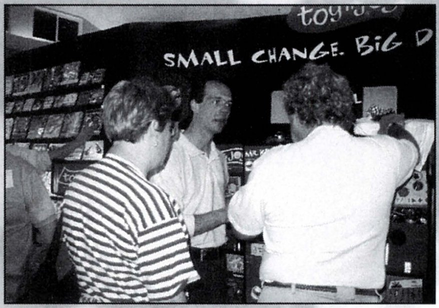
In addition to getting a notebook full of information from the experts on the panels, the question and answer time at the conclusion of each seminar proved to be an education in itself as audience members asked noteworthy questions and others shared their experiences.

LAI's Steve Shiao (l) and Bertha Higareda.

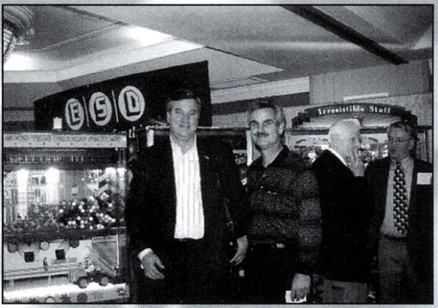
Operators Lynne Wirt (l) and Ron Troxel (c) with Brand Imports' Lauri Brand.

Kevin and Debbie Franciose of KDK Enterprises talk with Chuck Kays (r) in the Quick Silver booth.

Erik Olesker (l) and Brian Kovens of A&A Parkway are proud of their new sticker vendor.



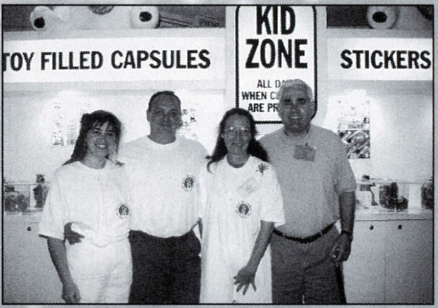
Peter J. Becker of Toy 'n Joy stayed busy the whole show talking to operators.



Michael MacGillivray (l) of Herman Goelitz Candy Co. talks with Alex Malavazos of Quick Silver.

From left: operators Brett and Roslyn Rogers, Bob Lovell of Chicago Lock, and operator Don Gill.

Gene Allen (l) and John Landers (r) of Swell Confections talk with operator Don Ulmer.



From left: operators Carolyn and Hal Kougn (helping in the booth), with Kid Zone's Janice Chacon and Neel Clark.

MORE ACTIVITIES

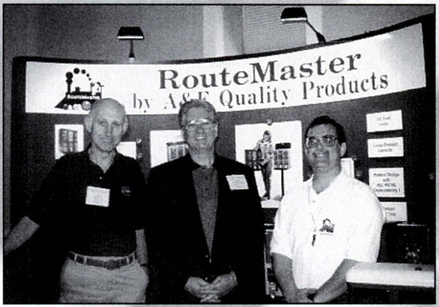
The conventioneers had a fun time on Friday night at Casino Nite, sponsored by a group of exhibitors. But it was back to business Saturday morning for the general meeting and election of officers. The association has been making strides in a number of areas the past few years, as Folz explained, "We are lobbying in several states for passage of a 50-cent exemption. The dollar coin will become a reality as a result of lobbying efforts by our association along with other interested groups. In keeping with the computer age, we now have a Web site on the Internet (www.nbva.org)." In addition, the association is working closely with an attorney in Washington D.C. on maintaining the provisions under the GATT treaty. It's another example of the association working for its members.

Officers confirmed for their second year of service are: Robert Folz (president), Fred Simon (vice-president), Neel Clark (secretary), Frank A. LaVecchia Jr., (treasurer), Vincent Schiro (convention chairman), Steve Caplan (convention co-chairman), and Bruce Eckard (convention co-chairman).

Wrapping up the planned activities was a tennis tournament sponsored by Oak Mfg. for those who still had the stamina for more after the exhibits closed! Slightly tired attendees finally packed up the golf clubs, tennis rackets, reams of brochures, and notebooks full of ideas, and ended the1998 NBVA with dinner, music and entertainment on Saturday night in the ballroom discussing the show, the industry, and the future.

During the dinner, Vincent "Buddy" Schiro, Schiro Vending, received the Jane Mason Lifetime Achievement Award. It's only been given four times during the last 10 years. Jane Mason was the national sales manager of Leaf Candy from 1949 until her death

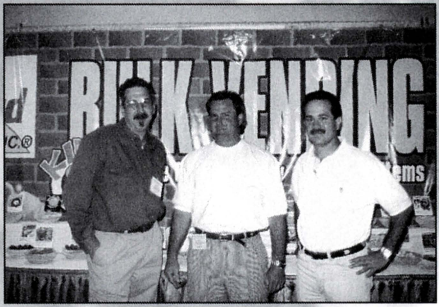
The Northwestern staff, (standing l-r): Denise Rhodes, Diane Olson, Richard Bolen, Denise Brookens, Ginny Bolen and Pat Bolen; (kneeling): Cliff Bolen.



From left: Jim Sconza of Sconza Candy with George Simpkins and Keith Garrett of A & E Quality Products.

Pictured at the Nash Confections booth, from left: Gail Nash, Glenn Nash, and Norma Skidmore.

From left: John Louvitakis, Ellen Jaffee, and Rachael Brown of Cutting Edge talk with Amy Gitlin of ESD.



Play Meter's technical writer Randy Fromm (l) with Concord's Phil Kalbough (c) and NBVA's treasurer Frank LaVecchia Jr.

Peter Fleck (l) of Primary/BMI with ESD's Amy Gitlin.

in1987. The award was created to recognize her achievement as a woman in the industry.

During the day, many showgoers took advantage of the fabulous weather to venture to places like the famous San Diego Zoo, Tijuana, Mexico, just 10 miles from the hotel, or Sea World. Like we said, there was definitely not a lack of things to do!

PRODUCTS DISPLAYED

Exhibitors were pleased with the turnout, talking with seasoned conventioneers and greeting newcomers. Here are some of the products attendees saw:

A & A/Parkway

Its new large capacity four-rack sticker machines that are user-friendly and easy to service and a large assortment of stickers and capsule items.

A & E Quality Products

Multiple product delivery system units with steel construction, Lexan lenses, and product spill tray.

Actionmatic

Located in the Machine-O-Matic booth, the company featured its talking vendor with a pull-out cash box that can be adapted to any country's currency.

Advanced Mfg.

Two-, three-, or four-column sticker vendors, plus its sticker unit that matches in size to a V2 capsule vendor.

Al Fischer & Co.

Assorted items for capsules, including glow-in-the-dark and black light sensitive items for 50-cent vend and silver jewelry and candy jewelry for 25-cent vend.

AllStar Distributing

Located in the VSI booth, the company showed a 2.3" spiral capsule vendor used in Europe, along with its standard sticker vending units.

Amusement Factory

A prototype of its eight-column lazy susan-style sticker machine, plus four- and six-column vendors and a rack with bulk and sticker units.

Ashland/Gabriel Mfg.

A variety of sticker and gumball machines, vending stands, capsule vendors, and a complete assortment of novelties, plush, gum, and candy.

Brand Imports

The new Giant Sticker Machine and a variety of stickers.

Cardinal Distributing

A large selection of 25- and 50-cent vend capsule items including alien buttons, krazy key chains, tart belly fruit drops, electronic pets, yo-yos, playing cards, and flower power jewelry (for Austen Power groupees).

Chicago Lock

Specific locks needed for precisely the security required for bulk vending like the tubular bulk vending lock with optional plastic key cover.

Concord Confections

A large selection of gumballs and candy, featuring Fruit Patch, Dalmatians, Tear Jerker Guts (sour gum), Earthballs, and Smiley Faces.

Creative Products

Lollipop vendor, Gas Pump gumball vendor, gumball spiral, and the Transformer (a capsule vending spiral).

Cutting Edge

The Blade Runner 4000 (four-column sticker machine) plus a large assortment of stickers including a Mystery Pack assortment that includes tattoos for 25-cent vends and Harley-Davidson tattoos for 50-cent vends.

Dan Brechner

Miscellaneous items for capsule vending including electronic video key chains available in six different sports themes.

Diamond Vending Supply

A large variety of capsule items including its unique egg capsule with assorted animals inside.

Earthquake Country Software

Route management software specifically designed for bulk vending.

ESD

Token slides with coin slots fitted for all countries and a new kiddie grip available on its token slides.

Global Gumballs.

Wowie Zowie kinetic unit, Gumball Wizard spiral unit, and its new Illusions kinetic unit.

Impulse Amusements

A classic antique style cabinet for use on any of its impulse units, including Dr. Love Love Meter, Psychic Advisor, True Grip Challenge, and Gina the Gypsy. Also showed the standard pedestal unit.

J.P. Distributors

Hoopz-Gum, Soccer Shot, Batter Up, Gumbotron, and Gravitron interactive gumball vendors.

Kid Zone

A large assortment of gumball, candy, stickers, tattoos, and capsule items, featuring wrap-around-the-arm tattoos, Coca Cola items, bugs on mugs, sticky aliens, and sticky hands.

Kiddie Rides USA

Musical Gumball Machine featuring kinetic action and entertaining sounds.

Lions Novelties

A variety of capsule toys including a ball-shaped telescope necklace, mugs, plates, and sticky characters.

Lock America Inc. (LAI)

Large assortment of security locks, coin and currency counters, bulk vending devices, and accessories.

M. Pressner & Co.

A large display of capsule items.

Machine-O-Matic

A large variety of bulk units in various combinations and the RB vendor with lockable cash tray.

Nash Confections

Sour Fruit Berries and Mighty Mites candy along with standard nuts, jelly beans, peanuts (both plain and chocolate coated) all formulated specifically for vending.

Northwestern Corp.

A large selection of bulk, candy, and gum vendors, including the Triple Double unit, Pro Bowl 2" capsule vendor, and a new louvered front on the 60 series; and its new Kiosk unit giving more firepower per square foot.

Nova Resolution Ind.

Line of digital electronic coin counters for non-AC powered vending and amusement equipment.

O.K. Mfg.

Gumball Coaster series, Kinetic Kid unit, spiral gumball, spiral capsule, and Classic series of candy machines.

Oak Mfg.

A large selection of gumball and candy vendors, featuring the Mid Hi Rise capsule vendor.

Peninsula Vending

Sticker Magic M600D machine with assorted stickers including a NASCAR series.

Prestige Premiums

A wide variety of capsule items.

Promotion in Motion

A sampling of candy items including Red Hots, Root Beer, Slice (fruit flavors), Boston Baked Beans, and Jaw Breakers.

Quick Silver

The Irresistible Stuff showcase vendor, Merlin Magic, Good Time Vending Factory, Quick Shot, and the Classic Vendor Jukebox unit.

Rhode Island Novelty

A large selection of capsule vending items.

Sconza Candy

An appealing selection of candy including Boston Beans, Copy Cats candy coated chocolate candy, and Chewy Louie fruit flavored candy.

Selectra International

Its line of front-loading sticker vendors along with a variety of stickers and tattoos

Superior Wholesale Supply

Many items from its full-line bulk vending service.

Swell Confections

A large variety of gumballs and candy including the unique Lick 'N Erasers (eraser-shaped candy).

Theisen Vending

The Jolly Roger Speedster and Mitchells' Heli Copter, Safari Jeep, and Jumbo Jet Set kiddie rides.

Toy 'n Joy

A large selection of capsule items, filled egg shaped capsules, vending machines, and its newest Mr. Bill Dollar bill acceptor that attaches to its vending units.

U-turn

Four- and eight-selection turnable gumball and candy vendors.

Vending Supply Inc. (VSI)

A large selection of stickers including the new Cheshire Cats, Savings series, the standard Peace and Love, Smiley Face, Nostalgia Tie Dye, and Nostalgia series. ▲

INTERNATIONAL SCENE

THOMSON AGREES TO BARNSTORMERS' RIGHTS

Thomson Entertainment has agreed to exclusive simulation distribution rights for The Electric Film Factory's latest computer graphic ride, Barnstormers, which brings back the pioneering days of aviation as riders fly in a classic aircraft and race over and under spectacular computer-modeled landscapes set in the 1930s.

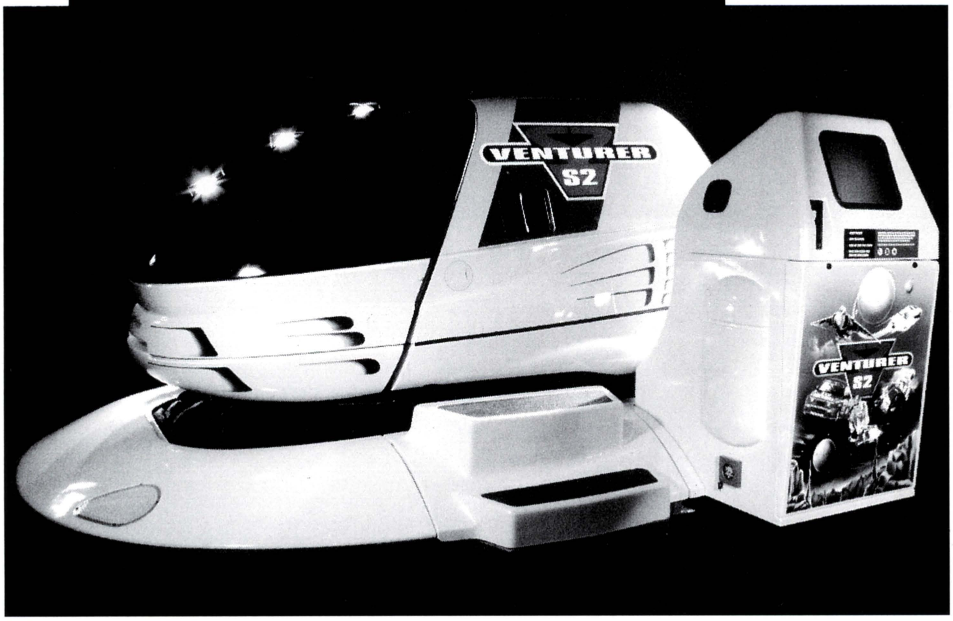
Barnstormers will be available late in the third quarter or early in the fourth quarter, according to director of business development and marketing Paula Bernard. The Electric Film Factory has provided a number of Thomson Entertainment's most popular ride films including Slot Car Boogie, Timegate to Egypt, and Thunder Drive. It also produced Millennium Odyssey, the first game for the new Venturer S2i.

In other Thomson news, the company has sold 20 Venturer S2 interactive simulators to leading French arcade supplier Avranches Automatic. Other orders for both passive and interactive versions of the new electric-motion base model Venturer S2 were received from South African distributor Nu Metro Entertainment and Scandinavian and Baltic States distributor Simulation Scandinavia for placement at shopping malls and other sites within their territories. Also, a distribution agreement was signed with Bonori SRL of Italy which ordered 14- and 19-seat versions of the Venturer mid-range capsule. New Equadorian agent Machinery S.A. also ordered three Venturer S2s.

Thomson Entertainment director and general manager Claude Bozzo commented, "To win such a large order from a company with the stature of Avranches Automatic in its particular market is, in our eyes, a real endorsement for the new interactive product. While the Venturer S2 interactive is currently leading the way, we are doing good business right across our product range, particularly in Europe."

Thomson can be reached at +44(0)293-563533; fax +44(0)1293-563388.

Twenty Thomson Venturer S2 interactive simulators are headed for France.



BRUNSWICK IS GENERAL SPONSOR OF CAE '98

Bowling giant Brunswick International Ltd. will be a general sponsor of the China Amusement Expo '98 scheduled for July 27-30 at the Beijing Exhibition Centre in Beijing, China. The official show title is the International Amusement Facilities and Equipment Exhibition for China. Joining Brunswick in exhibiting are other bowling companies AMF and Vision 2000.

Brunswick was the first bowling company to support CAE, said Andrew Shipman, director of marketing (Asia/Pacific) for the company. He noted that in 1993

INTERNATIONAL
SCENE

INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR

June 16-21
Expo-Diversiones '98, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. Call (3)614-3015; fax (3)615-1483.

July 23-25
Salex-Parkex '98, Sao Paulo, Brazil. Call +5511-261-3271; fax +5511-212-6126.

June 24-27
ExpoShow '98 and Casino '98, Linexpo Exhibition Complex, St. Petersburg, Russia. Call (7-812)325-6245; fax (7-812)325-6245.

July 27-30
China Amusement Expo, Beijing, PRC. Call (852) 2865-2633; fax (852) 2866-1770.

August 5-6
EXIME, World Trade Center, Mexico City, Mexico. Call W.T. Glasgow Inc., (708)333-9292; fax (708)333-4086.

August 14-17
TAMA-GTI Expo '98, Taipei World Trade Center, Taipei, Taiwan. Call Lauren Swartz, +886-2-2760-7407; fax +886-2-2762-3873.

August 26-28
Asian Amusement Expo, Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre, Singapore. Call (703)836-4800, ext. 766; fax (703)836-4801.

September 17-20
36th JAMMA Show, Tokyo Big Sight, Tokyo, Japan. Call 81-3-3438-2363; fax 81-3-5472-7115.

September 23-25
Amusement Park China '98, Shanghai Mart, Shanghai, China. Call (852)2965-1628; fax (852)2824-0178.

the China market consisted of about 64 bowling lanes mainly in hotels and clubs. By the end of 1997 the market had grown to over 15,000 lanes with centers opening throughout the mainland.

Brunswick has participated in the growth of the sport in Korea, Taiwan, and other Asian markets. In 1994 the company set up a joint venture named Brunswick China Ltd. with P & A Engineering Ltd. in Hong Kong, which is now the largest provider of indoor amusement solutions, especially bowling equipment, in China. Brunswick has five regional offices (Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu, and Wuhan) and works with the China Bowling Association to promote the development of bowling as a sport.

Other exhibits at CAE '98 will include products and services for indoor/outdoor amusement parks, sports and leisure facilities, computers and electronic games, security systems, promotion gifts, kiddie rides, virtual reality, and more. For additional details, call (852)2865-2633; fax (852)2866-1770/2866-2076.

ENADA SPRING HAS SUCCESSFUL 10TH SHOW

The 10th Enada Spring coin machine show posted high attendance figures at this year's event March 12-15 at the Rimini Trade Fair. There was an overall attendance increase of 27 percent over the '97 show, with a total of 17,149 visitors. Show organizers cite a positive influx of attendees from abroad, an increase of 23 percent (1,283 visitors). Three hundred firms exhibited, 60 from abroad.

The Rimini Fair's Hall F was occupied by billiard industry exhibitors, who participate every two years. Exhibits included video games, kiddie rides, jukeboxes, pinballs, table soccer, and other amusement equipment, accessories, and supplies. During the show an awards ceremony honored the 55 firms that have supported the show from its first edition. Officials present for the awards included SAPAR-AGIS chairman Lorenzo Musicco and Rimini Fair president Lorenzo Cagnoni.

GROWTH IN MEXICO BODES WELL FOR EXIME

According to EXIME (Exposicion Internacional de Maquinas de Entretenimiento) show organizers, Mexico's economy grew seven percent in real terms during 1997, the fastest growth rate in 16 years. The figure is significant for amusement equipment firms encouraged to again pursue this market which expects to see continued growth.

Last year EXIME saw over 2,200 buyers fill the aisles of the show. An increase of as much as 20 percent is anticipated this year due to the positive economic outlook. The show will take place at the World Trade Center in Mexico City, Mexico, Aug. 5-6. For more information, contact W.T. Glasgow Inc., (708)333-9292; fax (708)333-4086.

RUSSIA STAGES TWO EXHIBITIONS

St. Petersburg, Russia, is the location of the 4th ExpoShow '98 and Casino '98 at Linexpo Exhibition Complex June 24-27. ExpoShow is for the performance and show industry and will include exhibitors showcasing sound and light systems, special effects, entertainment facility design, video wall sys-

INTERNATIONAL SCENE

tems, musical instruments, studio and control equipment, and stage and discotheque equipment. Casino '98 highlights slot machines, videos, billiards equipment, and a wide array of gambling equipment. For more information, call (7-812)325-6245, 271-4147; fax (7-812)325-6245 or (7-502)201-5505.

AMUSEMENT PARK CHINA

The consistent growth in China's national economy over recent years is an indicator that this market is primed for entertainment and cultural development. That's good news for organizers, exhibitors, and attendees of the upcoming Amusement Park China slated for Sept. 23-25 at Shanghai Mart, Shanghai, China.

Revenues earned by amusement parks in China are on the rise, and foreign investment has been earmarked for six recreational parks in this country of 1.2 billion people. The parks will be in Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Wuhan, and Chengdu.

Reed Exhibition Companies and the China Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions are organizing the event, which is supported by the China National Nonferrous Industry Corp., the Ministry of Construction PRC, the Ministry of Culture, PRC, the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, the China National Tourism Administration, and the China Packaging Technology Association.

Exhibits will cover animatronics, high-tech equipment, jukeboxes, arcade games, gifts and novelties, food and beverage services, carousels, computer systems and software, participatory play equipment, admission systems and devices, water-related equipment, and more. For details, call David Lee, 852-2965-1628; fax 852-2824-0178/2824-0246.

AWP tax surprise

AWP (Amusement With Prizes) machines in the United Kingdom have been hit with a hefty 20.5 percent tax (twice the rate of inflation over the last three years), according to a recent report in *AB Europe* magazine. The tax, or Amusement Machine License Duty, was a budgetary move that surprised the U.K. trade association BACTA.

DEIGHTON TO ADVISE BLUEWATER

British firm Deighton International has been retained to advise Lend Lease Projects Ltd. on staging events and festivals at the new Bluewater retail and leisure park set to open next year in Dartford. The park will feature a number of specially designed spaces suitable for public and corporate events.

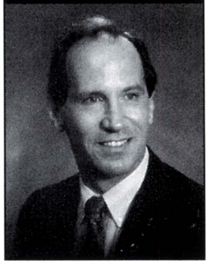
In addition, Deighton is pursuing opportunities for projects in Egypt, Cyprus, Sweden, Korea, Slovenia, and at the Trocadero Centre in the United Kingdom as well as advisors to the Millennium Dome in London. Deighton can be reached at +44-0-1489-570289.

GLOBETROTTING

- Jacob Schemaria informs that Mexel/Moy in Guadalajara has a new address: Concentro, AV. Vallarta No. 6503, Local No. 48 Zona E, Ciudad Granja, C.P. 45010, Zapopan, Jalisco, Mexico; 52 (3)110-1111; fax 52 (3)110-0489.
- Marc Raymond, formerly of Laniel Automatic Machines in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, has opened his own operating company, Raymarc Automatic. The firm is specializing in countertop amusement-only games.
- Budapest, Hungary, will host the 1998 International Congress on Automatic Playing Machines Sept. 17-21 on Margaret Island. The event will focus on new challenges and opportunities in the gaming industry in Eastern Europe. For more information, fax +361-329-2544, 361-340-4513.
- The Alpha Saigon amusement park will open this fall adjacent to the Saigon Zoo in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, according to Game Machine magazine. Togo Japan Inc. established the joint venture Alpha Entertainment Ltd. with the Saigon Zoo & Botanical Gardens to add the park. ▲

THE LEGAL
EAGLE

THOMAS FRICKE



Another look at state lottery PROHIBITIONS

Who would ever think that a video game is a lottery? Seventeen states prohibit lotteries in their constitutions. (They make exceptions for charity gaming, state lotteries, and the like.) Whenever operators have been successful in obtaining the passage of laws of what years ago would have been viewed as low-stakes gambling, their enemies seem to be seizing on these constitutional prohibitions to endeavor to invalidate the laws that the industry has worked so hard to get enacted.

Who are these enemies? Politicians in a hurry, certain religious-oriented interest groups, other forms of lawful gaming, and the states themselves, as lottery operators. What is their strategy? I don't believe that their strategy can be to win in court. Their constitutional arguments are just too flimsy for that.

Think about it. A word used in a state constitution but not defined is normally understood by the courts to have the meaning that the people had in mind when they first enacted the provision. In our context, if the people voted for a constitution in 1822 which provided: "lotteries are prohibited," then what is prohibited now is only what the "man in the street" thought a lottery was in 1822. It's pretty disingenuous to argue to your Supreme Court that this hypothetical person believed that he was protecting his great-great-grandchildren from the pestilence of slot machines. They weren't even invented until 1898! (Certain constitutional terms, such as "due process of law" get a much more elastic interpretation.)

There are other principles of interpreting the meaning of terms in state

LOTTERY AND GAMBLING PROHIBITION IN STATE CONSTITUTIONS

This list of each state's constitutional prohibitions includes two items. The first (a) is the "scope of constitutional prohibition;" the second (b) is the "most permissive constitutional standard, likely per court interpretations."

ALABAMA
a) Lotteries only; b) Mere skill involvement

ALASKA
a) No constitutional prohibition

ARIZONA
a) No constitutional prohibition

ARKANSAS
a) Lotteries only; b) Mere skill involvement

CALIFORNIA
a) Lotteries only; b) Video gambling held not lottery

COLORADO
a) Lotteries only; b) Mere skill involvement

CONNECTICUT
a) No constitutional prohibition

DELAWARE
a) All gambling; b) Skill predominance

FLORIDA
a) Lotteries only; b) Prohibition limited to ticket raffles

GEORGIA
a) All gambling; b) Research pending

HAWAII
a) No constitutional prohibition

IDAHO
a) Lotteries only; b) Mere skill involvement

ILLINOIS
a) No constitutional prohibition

INDIANA
a) No constitutional prohibition

IOWA
a) No constitutional prohibition

KANSAS
a) Lotteries only; b) Broadly construed

KENTUCKY
a) Lotteries only; b) Mere skill involvement

LOUISIANA
a) All gambling; b) Subject to local option

MAINE
a) No constitutional prohibition

MARYLAND
a) No constitutional prohibition

MASSACHUSETTS
a) No constitutional prohibition

MICHIGAN
a) No constitutional prohibition

MINNESOTA
a) No constitutional prohibition

MISSISSIPPI
a) No constitutional prohibition

MISSOURI
a) Lotteries only; b) Mere skill involvement

MONTANA
a) No constitutional prohibition

NEBRASKA
a) Lotteries only; b) Skill predominance

NEVADA
a) Lotteries only; b) Prohibition restricted to ticket raffles

NEW HAMPSHIRE
a) No constitutional prohibition

continued on following page

constitutions in general and the term "lottery" in particular, all of which add up to the operator's gambling device or amusement redemption exception being a downright unappealing target for the trial lawyer.

Nevertheless, a widely publicized suit on just this issue was argued by the Supreme Court of South Carolina on April 7. (The suit didn't start there. It began in Federal Court as a private lawsuit against a number of operators. The Federal Court asked the Supreme Court of South Carolina to advise whether a South Carolina law that regulates video pokers, violates that state's prohibition of lotteries.) Similarly in Texas, lawsuits involving operators and another permissive redemption law seem to be cropping up like mushrooms in the spring.

What is a lottery, anyway'? It's clear that in their constitutions, a few states prohibit all games of chance, while the majority stop short of this and prohibit only lotteries. Is a lottery a synonym for gambling? Nope.

Gambling, the broader term, has three familiar elements: 1) Consideration, 2) chance, and 3) prize. Reasonable commentators may differ on what the additional elements of a lottery are, but they have a consensus that lottery is a subset of gambling and thus must have more elements than these three. Here are two views of the elements of a lottery over and above the three elements of gambling.

View #1: 1) Numerous (often hundreds or thousands) of participants in a single game, 2) the sale or use of tangible evidences of participation like raffle tickets, 3) pooling of funds from the participants' purchases of the tickets, 4) a sponsor who promotes the scheme and keeps part of the proceeds of ticket sales, 5) a limited number of winners, and 6) determination of winners by chance alone and without any influence on the determination by the participants' reason, judgment, or other participation.

View #2: 1) A ticket raffle or its substantial equivalent, 2) pure-chance winner determination with no participation by those who have purchased tickets, 3) top prize of substantial value, worth hundreds or thousands of times more than the sale price of a single ticket.

Government-chartered lotteries helped build the first roads in the American colonies and even helped finance the Revolution. Alexander Hamilton once operated a chartered lottery. If we were to ask this Founding Father whether he recognizes either view, he would surely say that he recognizes both of them. And I have no doubt that he would not recognize the view that a "lottery" is such a broad term that it includes any activity with prize, chance, and consideration.

This obvious truth stops no attorney general. Do not confuse attorneys general with judges. Ask a judge what is the law and the judge will tell you the law. But attorneys general are after all attorneys. Ask any attorney what is the law and you will get... argument. And the argument will be influenced not only by the law but what the attorney's client wishes the law to be.

Here is the smoking gun: A state's constitution, first enacted some time in the last century, prohibits "lotteries." Then some time in the last decade the people make an exception for the state lottery. A senator asks the attorney general whether the state may include video poker in its lottery system. Now

continued from previous page

LOTTERY AND GAMBLING PROHIBITION IN STATE CONSTITUTIONS

This list of each state's constitutional prohibitions includes two items. The first (a) is the "scope of constitutional prohibition;" the second (b) is the "most permissive constitutional standard, likely per court interpretations."

NEW JERSEY
a) All gambling; b) Skill predominance

NEW MEXICO
a) No constitutional prohibition

NEW YORK
a) All gambling; b) Skill predominance

NORTH CAROLINA
a) No constitutional prohibition

NORTH DAKOTA
a) All gambling; b) Skill predominance

OHIO
a) Lotteries only; b) Restriction limited to ticket raffles

OKLAHOMA
a) No constitutional prohibition

OREGON
a) Lotteries and casinos; b) Can't assess; jurisprudence inadequate

PENNSYLVANIA
a) No constitutional prohibition

RHODE ISLAND
a) Lotteries only; b) Mere skill involvement

SOUTH CAROLINA
a) Lotteries only; b) Prohibition likely to be restricted to ticket raffles

SOUTH DAKOTA
a) All gambling; b) Exceptions for state-owned video games of chance

TENNESSEE
a) Lotteries only; b) Skill predominance

TEXAS
a) Lotteries only; b) Prohibition likely to be restricted to ticket raffles

UTAH
a) All gambling; b) Skill predominance

VIRGINIA
a) No constitutional prohibition

WASHINGTON
a) Lotteries only; b) Moot: the state has regulated amusement redemption

WEST VIRGINIA
a) Lotteries only; b) Mere skill involvement. Video gambling is not prohibited.

WISCONSIN
a) All gambling; b) Skill predominance

WYOMING
a) No constitutional prohibition

we've got 'em you say. If the prohibition means only prize, chance, and consideration (meaning, no video poker before the state lottery was allowed), then it's clear that the same term, "lottery," that now allows the state lottery, means that the state may operate VLTs.

On the other hand, if lottery means just ticket raffles, then video poker was never prohibited in the first place (under the constitution) so the legislature may now authorize video poker without going to the people to amend the constitution.

You would, of course, be correct but you would have reckoned solely on common sense and not the immense disingenuousness of which attorneys (including attorneys general) are capable when they are arguing to suit their clients. And when their clients, the respective governors pandering to the real, imagined, or hoped for reaction to the spread of lawful gambling, desire a "no video poker" opinion, that's what you'll get.

Not that it's an easy argument to make. You have to argue that in the last century, the people thought that "lotteries" meant all forms of gambling but in, say, 1985 the people thought that lotteries were just ticket raffles or perhaps pull-tabs. Then, when the legislature goes ahead and passes a law that allows video poker anyway, you have to take the position (if you're the attorney general) that this current enactment is unconstitutional even though the people now think that lotteries are just ticket raffles.

Of course, you may find yourself (if you're the attorney general) arguing that this current enactment was unconstitutional from the beginning, even though the people now think that lotteries are just ticket raffles. And in such a case, you will probably hope that nobody asks you why you took no action about this supposedly unconstitutional law for five years while a substantial industry developed in reliance on the law. Or, if the law is so unconstitutional, why the governor just didn't veto it in the first place?

On these issues, I believe that the result-oriented opinions of the attorneys general tend to be but a torrent of irrelevant citation and palpable fantasy.

In the meantime, I've been brushing up the list of state constitutional prohibitions published in this column a few months ago. Revisions and new information on South Carolina and Texas are included. There are up to 15 other states that have lottery prohibitions that could some day compel the operating community to resort to the courts to set their attorneys general straight on the law as they will, I expect, do in South Carolina and Texas. ▲

Tom Fricke is a St. Louis-based attorney who specializes in legal issues relating to the amusement game business. He serves as chairman of the IAFEC government relations committee and can be reached at (314)361-6672.

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Victory means cheering for the victor: particularly your side. This time it's different, yet wonderful. So, all together now! Stand. Cheer. Applaud. For the IRS, no less. Why? Because the IRS has finally come over to our side on a how-to-value-your-closely-held-business issue that will save you and your family a bundle of taxes.

Here's the victory story. For over 20 years, my office—via these articles, special reports, valuation books, and hundreds of actual reports valuing closely held businesses for tax purposes—has been screaming at the IRS, "We are entitled to take a minority discount when a majority owner of a closely held business transfers one or more minority interests to one or more of his children or grandchildren." Over the years, the smart courts agreed with us, but not the IRS.

Now the IRS agrees too. In writing. This is the current IRS position (Revenue Ruling 93-12): "A minority discount will not be disallowed solely because a transferred interest, when aggregated with interests held by family members, would be part of a controlling interest."

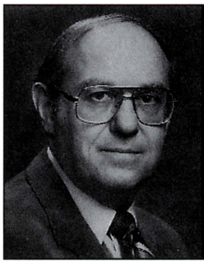
The ruling offers this practical example:

"P" owned all of the single outstanding class of stock of X corporation. P transferred all of P's shares by making simultaneous gifts of 20 percent of the shares to each of P's five children—A, B, C, D, and E.

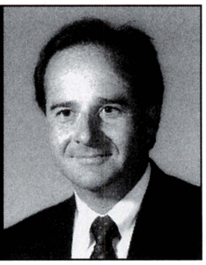
Let's translate the example into dollar bills for your business. Suppose X Corp. is Your Business and is valued at $3 million. Everyone agrees with the valuation. Even the IRS. In our office we would typically take a discount for general lack of marketability (usually in the 35 percent range) and an additional discount for minority interest that would bring the total discounts to 45 percent or $1,350,000 ($3 million X 45 percent). This means that the value of Your Business for tax purposes is only $1,650,000 ($3 million minus $1,350,000).

The IRS has accepted the marketability discount theory for years. Adding the minority discount theory to the IRS' acceptance list puts us (the business valuation appraisers and you—the business owners) in the driver's seat. Now, the IRS can only argue the amount of the discount, and as long as your discounts are reasonable (like the percentages used above), you are on solid ground. The stakes are high. Every dollar worth of discount you get can save you and your family up to 55 cents in gift and estate taxes. With this ruling in your pocket, now is

IRVING BLACKMAN



Irving Blackman and Brian Whitlock are CPAs with Blackman, Kallick, Bartelstein LLP in Chicago. Also lawyers, they specialize in business succession and wealth transfer. Both are sought-after speakers. Want to consult? Need a second opinion? Contact them at (312)207-1040; fax (312)207-1066. Their special reports are available at a nominal fee.



BRIAN WHITLOCK

the time (before Congress changes the rules in its search for tax revenues) to do your business transfer and estate planning.

Want to get a head start? Send for these special reports: (1) "How to Value Your Business For Tax Purposes;" (2) "Transfer Your Corporation to the Next Generation;" and (3) "How You Can Beat the Estate Tax—Legally."

> *“Every dollar worth of discount you get can save you and your family up to 55 cents in gift and estate taxes.”*

TAX PROBLEM TURNS INTO TAX-SAVING BONANZA

Usually a reader of this column with a tax problem calls personally. This time Sam, the reader's CPA, called. Sam explained the problem: Joe, his client, owned all the stock of Success Co., a C corporation. Success Co. started its fiscal year with $3.6 million in retained earnings (surplus), and $2 million in excess cash (not needed for operations) and now seven months later—had already accumulated another $1.2 million in excess cash. Business was great. (Sam explained that Joe, 58 years old, had struggled for many years to keep his business alive when all of a sudden—three years ago—the cash profits he always worked toward and dreamed of began to happen.)

Joe had a retained earnings problem—big time. A dividend to Joe would cost 40 cents on the dollar. Doing nothing would give the IRS a perfect shot at assessing the unreasonable accumulated earnings tax. What to do?

Here's the simple six-step solution: (1) We had Success Co. professionally appraised; (2) Joe gave $3 million worth of Success Co. stock to a charitable remainder trust (CRT); (3) the CRT sold the stock back to Success Co. for $3 million in cash; and (4) the CRT will invest the $3 million (Joe is the trustee) and give Joe a $240,000 (eight percent of $3 million) annuity every year for as long as Joe and his wife Mary live. After they are both gone, the balance in the CRT will go to Joe's family foundation.

Let's check the fantastic tax consequences: No dividend to Joe. No capital gains tax to Joe. Not one cent of the entire transaction will ever be subject to income tax, gift tax, or estate tax. Wait, we are not done! Joe immediately gets about a $1 million charitable deduction, which amounts to $400,000 in actual in-pocket cash income savings. Joe uses this $400,000 tax saving, a portion of the $240,000 annual annuity from the CRT, to buy a $6 million second-to-die life insurance policy on his and Mary's life. The policy is owned by an irrevocable life insurance trust (ILIT). The ILIT—actually step (5)—allows the $6 million to pass to Joe and Mary's family free of all taxes.

In summary, Sam and Joe's problem turned into an opportunity for Joe to get $3 million out of Success Co. (tax-free plus get a huge income tax deduction), have a flow of income for life, and create a $6 million tax-free pool of money for his family. A warning: There are many variations of this theme and the strategies used should only be attempted by experienced advisors.

Oh, yes, there is a step (6): Joe will elect S corporation status for next year. ▲

Want to learn even more tax-savings strategies? Send for these reports: (1) "The 25 Best Tax-Savings Ideas of the '90s;" (2) "How to Take Money Out of Your Closely-Held Corporation;" and (3) "Your Business, America's Best Tax Shelter."

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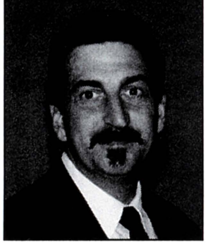

RANDY FROMM

How to choose a REPLACEMENT MONITOR

As interesting and fun as it is to fix video game monitors, there are times when it's just not possible or practical to repair them. When the CRT fails, for instance, it is my recommendation that, in most cases, the best thing to do is to dispose of the CRT and frame, save the chassis as a spare, and obtain a replacement monitor.

A Play Meter Monthly Exclusive

But how do you choose a replacement monitor? If you are putting together some new game cabinets, which monitor should you choose? Which monitor is the "best" or at the very least, which monitor is the best choice for you and your needs? The answer to that question can be puzzling. In my opinion, the difficulty in choosing the proper monitor lies somewhere between selecting the proper wine to have with dinner and eenie-meenie-minie-mo.

While price is usually an important factor, the purpose of this article is to look at the technical considerations of monitor selection: the monitor specifications.

Understanding monitor specifications

Some of these terms are pretty much self explanatory. Others are a little more arcane. Sometimes things get a little confusing as individual manufacturers pick and choose which specifications they choose to list for their monitors and how these specifications are expressed. Here's a little glossary of monitor specifications. Later, we'll take a look at some common replacement monitors and the specifications for each.

MAIN INPUT: This is the specification for the input power requirements. While most of us assume that everything runs on 120 volts AC, this is a global business and some people need monitors that are suitable for operation on anything from 100 to 240 volts.

POWER CONSUMPTION: Most people think of this as "wattage." Power consumption is not generally an issue when selecting a monitor. All monitors are more-or-less equally efficient as far as this is concerned. It's interesting how efficient monitors actually are with even the largest of monitors consuming little more power than a 100-watt light bulb.

VIDEO BANDWIDTH: This is an extremely important consideration. Unfortunately it is one that is little understood. A monitor's ability to respond to rapidly changing video input signals is known as the "video bandwidth." NTSC standard bandwidth for broadcast television is around 6 Megahertz. (In truth, this includes the audio portion of the program as well. The actual, usable video bandwidth is around 4 Mhz.) In simplified terms, that means that the video amplifier circuits must respond fast enough to switch on and off at least four million times per second. To deliver the best picture possible, the monitor should be capable of responding faster than the maximum high-frequency output of the video signal that's driving it.

The higher the bandwidth, the better the picture will look. Monitors with poor video bandwidth will exhibit smeared and indistinct images. This can be easily confused with a focus problem. A monitor with poor bandwidth displays images that are indistinct; they're not at all sharp and crisp in appearance. Images will often appear smeared to the right (in the direction of travel of the electron beams.) In a nutshell, higher video bandwidth is a very desirable specification.

VIDEO INPUT: There are a few different types of video inputs. There is composite video, S-video, and RGB. Composite video is what comes out of the RCA plug on your VCR labeled video output. This is normal consumer-type video. In this system the sync signal is also combined with the video signal as a blacker-than-black negative-going sync tip, which is later removed by the sync-stripper circuit in the monitor.

S-video is a somewhat more sophisticated system that separates the "luminance" (the black and white portion of the signal) from the "chroma" which, as

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Randy Fromm's Arcade School 1944 Falmouth Dr El Cajon, CA 92020-2827 TEL 619 593 6131 FAX 619 593 6132 the name suggests, is the color portion of the video. This results in a much cleaner, higher resolution signal. S-video is used in high-end consumer video gear and in the video system in photo-sticker machines. In this system, the sync signal is also combined with the luminance signal as a blacker-than-black negative-going sync tip.

Top of the line (as far as image quality is concerned) is the RGB system used by video games and desktop computers. The red, green, and blue video signals are each input separately to the three video amplifiers in the monitor. In this system, the sync signal is carried on a separate wire. All conventional video games use monitors with RGB inputs.

DEGAUSSING: To prevent the earth (or anything else) from permanently magnetizing the CRT, all color monitors use a degaussing coil. A degaussing coil is a demagnetizing coil that surrounds the outside of the picture tube. It is powered by 120 volts AC. The rapidly changing field quickly demagnetizes the CRT by scrambling any molecules that might be aligned through magnetic attraction.

But the degaussing coil can't remain continuously energized while the monitor is in normal operation. Disregarding the fact that it will burn-up if left continuously energized, the magnetic field produced by the coil will produce some radical distortion in the picture. Most monitors use an automatic degaussing circuit to control the coil. The degaussing coil is only activated when the monitor is first turned on, and then only briefly at that. To reactivate the coil, the monitor must be allowed to cool for 10 to 20 minutes. You will NEVER purchase a monitor that has manual degaussing; it will always be automatic.

SYNC INPUT: Along with the video signal, the computer also generates two sync signals. A horizontal sync signal tells the monitor to stop drawing the horizontal line and quickly retrace to the left side of the CRT. A vertical sync signal occurs when the beam is in the lower right corner. The vertical sync signal tells the monitor to start the vertical retrace sequence, turning the electron gun off and returning it to the top of the CRT.

The sync signals have a separate input to the monitor. In some cases, there is a separate connection for both the vertical and horizontal sync. Most of the time, the vertical and horizontal sync signals are combined at the computer to form something called composite sync.

Computers may produce either one of two types of sync signals. The vertical and horizontal sync signals may be positive sync or negative sync. Positive sync starts at around +5 volts, and pulses briefly down to 0 volts and back to +5 volts. Negative sync does just the opposite. It's normally at 0 volts, pulsing briefly to +5 volts and back in order to synchronize the monitor. Both sync systems are equally effective. The designer of the game's hardware simply chooses one system or the other. In order to make their monitors compatible with any computer system, most monitor manufacturers have designed their monitors to accept both positive and negative sync inputs.

The negative sync is usually connected to the monitor through a separate connector. Some monitors use a switch to select either positive or negative sync; others are designed to accept either sync polarity at a single connector, automatically detecting its polarity. Virtually all game systems of today use composite, negative sync.

SCANNING FREQUENCIES: Here is where you must be careful. Standard resolution monitors have a horizontal scanning frequency of 15,750 hz. Actually, this figure is 15,734 hz in an NTSC standard system.) Vertical frequency is 60 hz (59.92 to be exact).

It used to be that that was all that we needed and all that was available. Now, there are higher resolution systems that require different monitors.

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The more lines you can display on the screen during each field, the greater the resolution of the monitor. One way to increase resolution is to speed up the horizontal sweep speed. A faster horizontal deflection circuit can create more lines per field.

The next step up in resolution is a medium resolution standard. In computer lingo, this is EGA resolution. The medium resolution standard uses a horizontal scan frequency of 25 Khz and a vertical scan rate of 60 hz. This is the standard first used in games like *Paperboy, APB, Super Sprint, Championship Sprint, Hard Drivin', Race Drivin',* and *Steel Talons.* VGA resolution has a horizontal frequency of 31.5 Khz. This is equivalent of 640x480 lines of resolution in a desktop computer system.

Make certain of the resolution of the monitor you're looking for. The horizontal scanning frequency is a good way to refer to this specification (e.g. "I need a 25 Khz monitor.").

DOT PITCH: This is the spacing (expressed in millimeters) between two phosphor stripes of the same color as they are laid down the inside of the front glass screen of the CRT. Smaller is better but you must remember to take into account the size of the CRT itself. In other words, .28 mm dot pitch is easily attainable in a 14-inch picture tube but expect something like .82 mm when you have a 26-inch CRT.

AGENCY COMPLIANCE: These are the safety guys like Underwriters Laboratories and the Canadian Safety Association, the Department of Health and Human Services, and their counterparts around the world. It's important that all monitors carry proof of compliance.

Compare these specifications

Happ Controls 19-inch

a. This is an inexpensive monitor of Korean manufacture

b: MAIN INPUT is 120 V a.c., + 10%, -15%, 50/60 Hz; an isolation transformer is required

c: POWER CONSUMPTION is 70 w

d: VIDEO BAND is 8 MHz

e: VIDEO INPUT is RGB separate

f: DEGAUSSING is automatic at power on

g: SYNC INPUT is separate horizontal and vertical (negative or positive), composite horizontal and vertical (negative or positive)

h: SCANNING FREQUENCIES are horizontal 15.75 Khz nominal and vertical 50 or 60 hz nominal

Wells-Gardner K7000 Series Monitors

a: MAIN INPUT is 120 V a.c., 50-60 hz; isolation transformer required

b: VIDEO INPUT is video type—RGB analog; Video Level—1-5 volts peak-to-peak, other levels optional; Sync Type—TTL sync, separate or composite, negative or positive

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c: DEGUASSING is automatic at power on

d: SYNC INPUT is horizontal and vertical, positive or negative, composite or separate

e: SYNC FREQUENCIES are horizontal, 15.1 through 25.0 Khz Vertical, 47-63 hz

f: REMOTE CONTROLS are contrast, brightness, horizontal centering, vertical size, vertical centering, and vertical hold

g: RESOLUTION is standard Resolution—640 x 200

h: AGENCY COMPLIANCE is UL, CSA, DHHS radiation performance standard

Wells Gardner U5000 Series Monitors

a: MAIN INPUT is 90-264 V a.c., 50 -70 Hz; no isolation transformer required

b: VIDEO INPUT is Video Type—RGB analog; Video Level—1.5-4 volts peak-to-peak, other levels optional—Sync Type—TTL sync, separate or composite, negative or positive

c: DEGUASSING is automatic at power on

d: SYNC INPUT is horizontal and vertical, positive or negative, composite or separate

e: SYNC FREQUENCIES are horizontal 15.75 or 25 Hz and vertical 47 - 63 Hz

f: REMOTE CONTROLS are contrast, brightness, horizontal centering, vertical size, vertical centering, vertical hold

g: RESOLUTION is standard Resolution—640 x 200, mid resolution—640 x 400

h: AGENCY COMPLIANCE is UL, CSA, DHHS radiation performance standard

Neotec 25-inch EGA Mid Res

a: PICTURE TUBE is 25" CRT, 0.82 mm dot pitch

b: SIGNAL TYPE is analog 1.0 -4.0 V p-p positive

c: SYNC SIGNAL is TTL positive or negative

d: BAND WIDTH is 30 MHz

e: FREQUENCY is 24.8 KHz

f: RESOLUTION is 640 x 350

g: POWER SUPPLY is 120-220 VAC, 50 - 70 Hz

h: POWER CONSUMPTION is 90w

i: EXTERNAL USER CONTROLS are brightness, contrast, H-size, H-position, V-size

V- position, V-hold, and Pincushion

j: WEIGHT is 75 lbs.

Neotec 27" EGA Mid Res.

a: PICTURE TUBE is 27" CRT, 0.84 mm dot pitch

b: SIGNAL TYPE is RGB SEPARATE 0.7 V p-p (1.0 - 4.0 V p-p)

c: SYNC SIGNAL is TTL positive or negative

d: VIDEO BAND WIDTH is 30 MHz

e: FREQUENCY is 24.8 Khz

f: RESOLUTION is 640 x 350

g: DISPLAY AREA is 543.56 x 407.67 (mm), 21.4 x 16.05 (inch)

h: POWER SUPPLY is 120 - 220 VAC, 50 - 70 hz

i: POWER CONSUMPTION is 115w

j. EXTERNAL USER CONTROLS is brightness, contrast, H-size, H-position, V-size, V-position, V-hold, and Pincushion

k: WEIGHT is 85 lbs.

Neotec 26" VGA High Res.

a: PICTURE TUBE is 26" CRT, 0.82 mm dot pitch, flat screen

b: DISPLAY COLORS is infinite color, analog 0.7 V p-p positive

c: SYNC SIGNAL is TTL positive or negative

d: VIDEO BAND WIDTH is 45 MHz

e: FREQUENCY is 31.5 Khz

f: RESOLUTION is 640 x 480

g: DISPLAY AREA is 510 x 385 (mm), 20.07 x 15.15 (inch)

h: INPUT TERMINAL is 15 Pin D-Sub Connector

i: POWER SUPPLY 120 - 220 VAC, 50 - 70 Hz

j: POWER CONSUMPTION is 110W

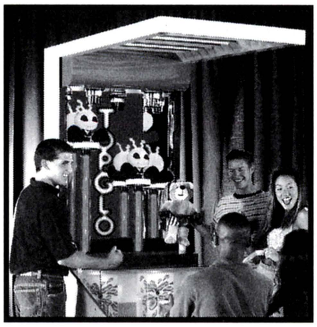
k: EXTERNAL USER CONTROLS is brightness, contrast, H-size, H-position, V-size, V-position, V-hold, and Pincushion

l: WEIGHT is 75 lbs.

Author's note: I have started a new service for the coin-op community. Randy Fromm's Monitor Club has agreements in place with just about all of the industry's monitor manufacturers and suppliers to distribute replacement monitors to operators and small manufacturers. I have been promised great pricing and will be passing these savings along to you. It's free to join the Monitor Club and members will receive technical assistance, troubleshooting flowcharts, and more.

The catch is that everything must be prepaid or C.O.D. but the savings will be worth it. Just call me and let me know what you're looking for and I'll let you know exactly how much it will be, delivered to your doorstep. For more details, see the Web site at (http://randyfromm.com/monitor-club).

That's all for now. See you at the Arcade School. ▲



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TICKET
TECH

VIC FORTENBACH

Rewarding customers for a HOLE-IN-ONE

One of the main attractions on a miniature golf course is the last hole. Also called the 18th hole, it captures the golf ball and ends the game. Some miniature golf course owners have set up an automatic ticket dispenser and circuit/sensor that will dispense a ticket to the player if a hole-in-one is made. In most cases the ticket is good for a replay game of miniature golf on a return visit.

There are many different configurations of 18th holes. Where I work, I have three miniature golf courses, each with different 18th holes. All three 18th holes are together in one "house" enabling the ball capture to be centralized. Some golf courses have one main 18th hole and all the courses end up at that one location.

No matter which configuration you have, rewarding the player for a hole-in-one is a real thrill. Adding an automatic ticket dispenser for this task really is not that hard, but it does take some planning and engineering.

If your 18th hole currently does not vend a ticket for a hole-in-one and you want to add the option, you must take steps to prevent cheating. On the other hand, you don't want your 18th hole to look like Fort Knox. If your 18th hold is not already inside an enclosure, a simple tubular aluminum fence around the hole with a space under it for the putted ball to roll under works quite well.

Don't just use a chain link fence. Besides looking tacky, it will bend and make the 18th hole look uninviting. The tubular aluminum fencing is easily assembled and comes in several sizes and heights with a myriad of extra options. It is available at The Home Depot in off-white or black. The spacing between each vertical rail is about five inches. Since an arm will fit in between the rails, you will need to place the fence far enough away so a ball cannot be tossed in the hole. Since the fencing configurations are limitless, use your imagination.

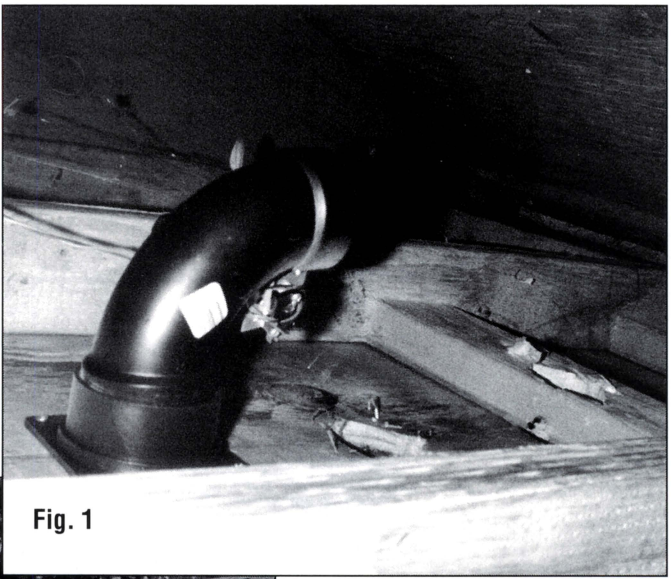


Fig. 1

The drain fitting has a flange around the edge that makes a great mounting bracket.

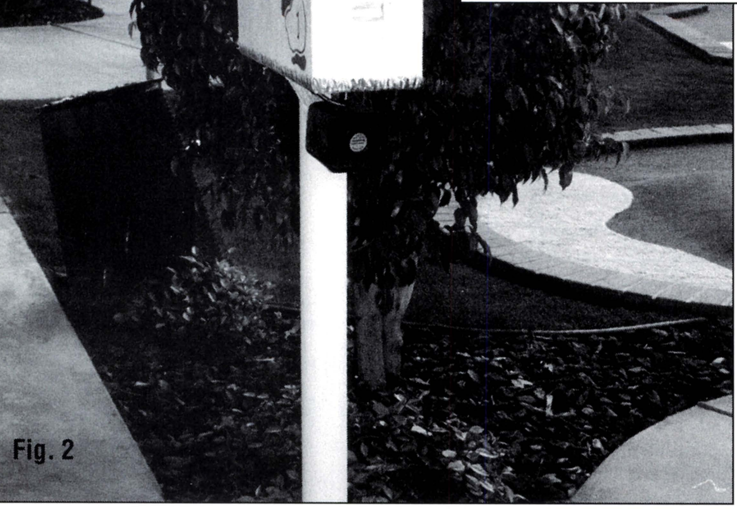


Fig. 2

Customers get a ticket for a hole-in-one from this ticket dispenser at the 18th hole.

Electricity is another concern for the ticket dispenser. Most miniature golf courses have lots of night lights for night time play, but "day lighting" may not be available. One power option to consider is the fountains in and around the courses. Since the fountain pumps are on when the park is open, it could be simple to run a power conduit to the 18th hole to power the ticket dispenser. One problem I encountered is shutting off the fountains on windy days so the wind will not spray fountain water all over the guests. Obviously, with the fountains off, the 18th hole ticket dispenser will not work.

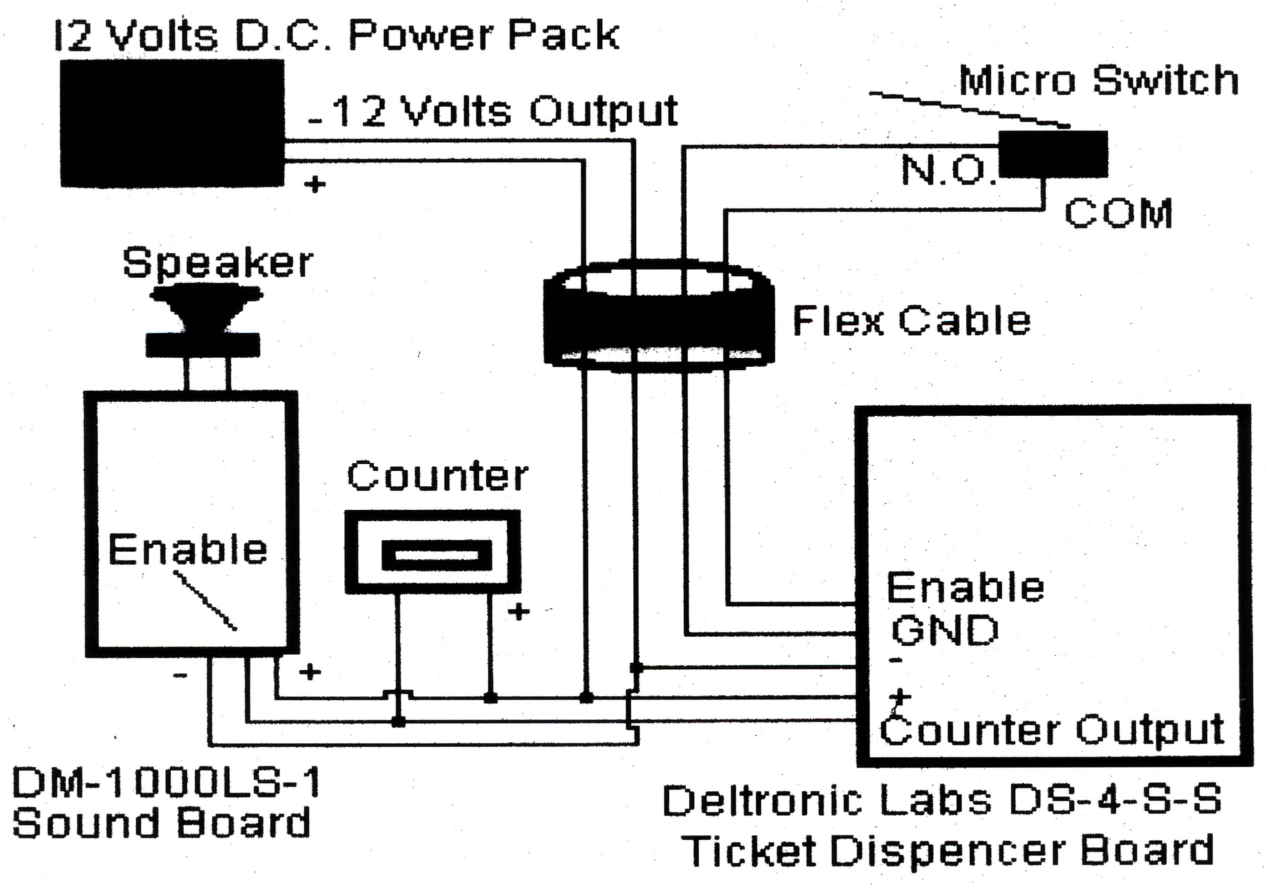
It is a minor inconvenience for us since winds severe enough to warrant turning off the fountains only happen two or three times a year. But if you're in a windy location, if you turn your fountains off often, or if you don't have any fountains, you'll need to find another power source. One idea is the bumper boat pond pump house if it's near the 18th hole. If you don't have any fountains or a bumper boat pond, then you might consider the go-kart repair shed as your power source.

Not many 18th holes are water/weatherproof so you must take extra precautions to avoid a hazardous condition. The main power circuit for the 18th hole comes into the house where the golf balls are collected. From there I use a GFI (ground fault interrupter) outlet, a timer, and a simple wall power pack to provide power to the ticket dispenser enclosure. A standard Christmas light timer was used to turn off the power to the 18th hole at night. The power pack I use is available from Jameco Electronics in Belmont, Calif., (800)831-4242. The part number is 143714 or 143722. Both have the same 2000 ma output. The only difference is the output connector, which you will cut off and discard anyway.

> ***"No matter which configuration you have, rewarding the player for a hole-in-one is a real thrill."***

The power pack is a small all-in-one enclosure and provides a filtered 12 volts DC, which is what the ticket dispenser input power requires. You can go the route of a separate transformer, rectifier, and capacitor, but I recommend the power pack. If you do want to go the separate route, get parts rated for a minimum of two amps output; all the of the parts are available from Radio Shack.

The enclosure we use for the ticket dispenser is a beefed up version of the Outside Mount Aluminum Housing from Deltronic Labs, (215)997-8616. In fact, the enclosure from Deltronic fits inside our enclosure. Since we need a vandal-proof enclosure, we went to a commercial metal shop with a basic drawing and the Deltronic Labs enclosure in hand. It was a simple task for the metal shop to construct a suitable enclosure. (see fig. 2) Ours is mounted on a pole 10 feet from the 18th holes. The wires from



Schematic drawing of the 18th hole ticket dispenser circuit the 12 volts power pack and the detector switches were run inside a flex cable and buried about a foot underground. We had to go under a sidewalk to run the flex cable, but it was not a real problem. We used a garden hose with full power water running to "drill" under the sidewalk through the dirt for the flex cable.

More frills

There are several frills you can add to make your 18th hole exciting, from a simple bell or a police light to electronic speech to announce and congratulate the winner. I opted for the electronic speech. Your choice will determine which sensor setup you need to detect the golf ball.

I used a Deltronic Labs DL-4-SS ticket dispenser. It will vend one ticket for each pulse, in this case each golf ball. I mounted a single microswitch to the top side of some 1-1/2-inch black PVC elbow pipe. The elbow pipe was mounted to the underside of the 18th hole with a drain bracket, which is basically a modified drain fitting. The drain bracket is used as a fitting at the end of the pipe to drain water from a flat surface. (see fig. 1)

The drain fitting has a flange around the edge that makes a great mounting bracket. There are several slots that must first be cut away to allow the golf ball clear passage through the drain fitting and through the elbow pipe while hitting the microswitch to activate the ticket dispenser.

> ***"The speed of the speech is adjustable, so I speed it up so it sounds a little like a chipmunk."***

I used a single microswitch directly connected to the ticket dispenser. The smaller microswitches used on pinball machines are too fragile for this use. A *Skee-Ball* scoring switch or similar switch works best. If you choose to have a police light, bell, or siren a second switch should be added so they can be activated separately. Check the power requirement of the light or siren because the recommended power supply will only accommodate an extra load of 300 ma. If your light or siren has a higher power requirement, you will need to purchase a second power supply. Do not use any light or siren that requires 120 volts AC Using any voltage higher that 12 volts DC could cause a shock or fire hazard.

The microswitch I used had an actuating blade of two inches. I mounted the microswitch on the TOP side of the elbow so a slow moving ball would not get stuck on the switch and keep it actuated and vending out hundreds of tickets. I put hot glue all over the connections for the switch terminals so moisture would not be a concern.

Since we have three 18th holes, it was just a matter of making three identical pipe brackets and elbows with switches and connecting them in a parallel wiring arrangement. This configuration will only allow one ticket per hole-in-one. The odds of putting two golf balls into two holes at the same time would be extremely rare.

The wiring through the flex conduit was two wires for the power and two for the ticket dispenser input. I used a six-wire cable so IF a wire was to somehow break inside the flex conduit, I had two back-up wires to use. If you go with an extra switch for the police light or siren, a third pair of wires would be needed if you place the police light or siren near the ticket dispenser.

Placing the police light or siren on the 18th hole would not require the extra set of wires through the flex conduit. Keep in mind that if you do use a light or siren, the pulse from the switches is too short to activate it. You will have to engineer a time delay circuit to keep the light or siren on for a extended period of time.

The DL-4-S-S ticket dispenser has a six-pin connector: two for power, two for input from the switches, and two for a meter. I used the meter output pins to activate the sound board and a meter for accounting purposes. The sound board I used was from Electech Enterprises in City of Industry, Calif., (626) 333-6394. The sound board I used is part number DM-1000LS-1. It has an on-board power amp and will accommodate any sound up to four minutes in length. The actual sound is stored on an EPROM and must be pre-programmed. I digitized my voice with the following text: "Congratulations, you did it. You made a hole-in-one. Here is your ticket for a free game of miniature golf, good on your next visit."

The speed of the speech is adjustable, so I speed it up so I sound a little like a chipmunk, which sounds great. Electech Electronics also sells a sound board that does not require any special pre-programming, which means it can be programmed on-site and changed at will. The sound output from this board is not as clear as the EPROM version. If you want to use the EPROM I created, or would like a custom message, contact me for further information.

The whole project was completed in less than three days at a cost of less than $500. The majority of the cost went to the all-metal enclosure. If you need additional information or have any questions about this project I can be reached at Vicco Electronics (760) 322-4000 or by e-mail at (Vic@Vicco.com). ▲

Merit holds five tournament events in *four* weeks

March was a busy month for Merit Industries' World Series of Darts with five tournaments taking place across the country in four short weeks.

The California Classic was held in Sacramento on March 6 with Cricket & Co. as the co-sponsor. The following week it was off to the Midwest for the Iowa Classic with Amuse-O-Matic pitching in its support.

There were two events held on the weekend of March 20-22 approximately 5,000 miles apart: Albany Amusements was hosting the Empire State Classic while Gamemasters of Hawaii was putting on the Aloha Classic. The final event, the Jacksonville Classic, was co-hosted by Number One Vending, Just Darts, and River City Darts.

The final World Series event took place last month in Kissimmee, Fla., and the $60,000 Ultimate Game Challenge is scheduled for August 6. The event has been extended by a day and will include The World Team Championship.

For more on these and other *Scorpion* dart promotions, call (800)300-5281 or check out the company's Web page (http://www.scorpiondarts.com). Here's a look at the results from all five events.

California Classic

2nd Chance Blind Draw: 1st-Kevin Young of Carson City, Nev., and Gary Gladwill of Sacramento; 2nd-Joe McMahon and Rick Brazil, both of Sacramento; 3rd-Kathy Johnson of Garden Grove and Teba Archuleta of Sacramento.

Scorpion Challenge: 1st-Kent Allen of Vallejo; 2nd-Rich Rohme of San Jose; 3rd-Tom Gaul of Vancouver, Wash.

Women's Doubles (501): 1st-Teba Archuleta of Sacramento and Rhonda Brown of Citrus Heights; 2nd-Jean Dayley and Teresa Nerona, both of San Jose; 3rd-Corrine Stockton and Debbie Stewart, both of Sacramento.

No-Pro Singles: 1st-Jesse Sechak of Oakland; 2nd-Howard Meyers of Simi Valley; 3rd-Graham Earp of Van Nuys.

Women's Doubles (501/Cricket): 1st-Laurie Bleakmore of Sunnyvale and Kristi DeBenedictis of Pleasanton; 2nd-Teba Archuleta of Sacramento and Rhonda Brown of Citrus Heights; 3rd-Corrine Stockton and Debbie Stewart, both of Sacramento.

Pro Singles: 1st-Sean Downs of Colton; 2nd-Paul Lim of San Bernardino; 3rd-Rob Heckman of Fairfield.

Open 4-Person: 1st-Jim Ringot of Tracy, Jesse Sechak of Oakland, Rob Heckman of Fairfield, and James Lee of Oakland; 2nd-Frank Hernandez of Stockton, Sean McGee and Craig Lehman, both of Ukiah, and Ken Allen of Vallejo; 3rd-Tom Romandi of Los Angeles, Graham Earp of Van Nuys, Howard Meyers of Simi Valley, and Jeff Hubbard of Los Angeles.

Mixed Triples: 1st-Kathy Johnson of Garden Grove, Paul Lim of San Bernardino, and Sean Downs of Colton; 2nd-Corrine Stockton, Kent Allen of Vallejo, and Frank Hernandez of Stockton; 3rd-Linda Rose of Tracy, Howard Meyers of Simi Valley, and Graham Earp of Van Nuys.

No-Pro Doubles: 1st-Frank Schneider and Kevin Osbourne, both of Sacramento; 2nd-Howard Meyers of Simi Valley and Graham Earp of Van Nuys; 3rd-Rich Rohme of San Jose and Craig Shirk of Santa Clara.

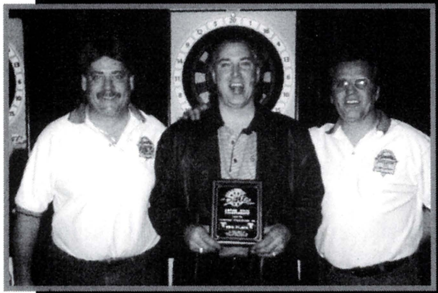
Pro Doubles: 1st-Sean Downs of Colton and Paul Lim of San Bernardino; 2nd-Dean Evans of Garden Grove and John Whitted Jr. of Sacramento; 3rd-Tom Romandi and Jeff Hubbard, both of Los Angeles.

Women's Singles: 1st-Olga Cade of Oakland; 2nd-Louise Drake of Sacramento; 3rd-Laurie Bleakmore of Sunnyvale.

Aloha Classic No-Pro Doubles winners Bill Needham (l) and Mitchell Phillips with Merit's Sabrina Mokuahi.

Aloha Classic No-Pro Singles winners and runners up, (l-r): Robert Eum, Louis Santiago, Paipai Falemalu, and Bob Wiles of Merit.

Empire State Classic Women's Doubles (501/Cricket) winners Carolyn Mars and Connie Sroka with Merit's Scott Dougherty (l) and Jack Hughes.



New York MVP Joe Bruso with Scott Dougherty of Merit (l) and Buz Teson of Albany Amusements.

First-place Blind Draw winners in Iowa Kevin Jones (l) and Terry Becker with Amuse-O-Matic's Bill Stephenson.

From left: Mixed Triples winners in Iowa Lane Helgeson, Shae Schroeder, and Scott Dougherty with Merit's Bob Haft.

Jacksonville Classic Women's Doubles (501), (l_r): Terry Taylor, Merit's Darren Capotosto, and Theresa Sullivan.

Merit's Rich Forkey (l) with Pro Singles runner up Jerry Driskill in Florida

Jacksonville Classic

2nd Chance Blind Draw: 1st-Chris Vanzant and Alvin Reynolds, both of New Port Richey; 2nd-Chris Sams and Jesus Sepulveda, both of Jacksonville; 3rd-Luke Bogigan of Orlando and Steve Doane of Jacksonville.

Scorpion Challenge: 1st-Rick Pujdak of Naples; 2nd-L.A. Davis of Winter Haven; 3rd-Ronnie Lott of Tampa.

Women's Doubles (501): 1st-Theresa Sullivan of Clermont and Teri Taylor of Orlando; 2nd-Cherie Munyon and Marie Martin, both of Jacksonville; 3rd-Carolee Goodwin of Kissimmee and Karen Montalvo of St. Cloud.

No-Pro Singles: 1st-Randy Goins of Middleburg; 2nd-Travis Hurd of Orlando; 3rd-Alvin Reynolds of New Port Richey.

Women's Doubles (501/Cricket): 1st-Roxy Martin and Patty Arden, both of Orlando; 2nd-Karen Montalvo of St. Cloud and Carolee Goodwin of Kissimmee; 3rd-Cherie Munyon and Marie Martin, both of Jacksonville.

Pro Singles: 1st-Kenny Doyle of Orlando; 2nd-Jerry Driskill of Winter Garden; 3rd-Thom Johnson of Largo.

Open 4-Person: 1st-Chris Sams, Larry Schramm, Shawn Dollison, and Dave Wilkinson, all of Jacksonville; 2nd-T. J. May of Winter Springs and Ansel Warner, Chooch Austin, and Brian Dennis, all of Kissimmee; 3rd-Kenny Doyle, Junior Johnson, Steve Gilstrap, all of Orlando, and L.A. Davis of Winter Haven.

Mixed Triples: 1st-Patty Arden of Orlando, Thom Johnson of Largo, and Kenny Doyle of Orlando; 2nd-Theresa Sullivan and Jimmy Sullivan, both of Clermont, and Jerry Driskill of Winter Garden; 3rd-Heather Bennet of St. Petersburg, and Chris Sams and Larry Schramm, both of Jacksonville.

No-Pro Singles: 1st-Howie Brigance of Jacksonville and Randy Goins of Middleburg; 2nd-Mike Sanders of Melbourne and Larry Wilson of St. Cloud; 3rd-Earl Taylor and Scott Burch, both of Jacksonville.

Pro-Doubles: 1st-Larry Schramm and Chris Sams, both of Jacksonville; 2nd-Thom Johnson of Largo and Kenny Doyle of Orlando; 3rd-Steve Johnson of Riverview and L.A. Davis of Winter Haven.

Women's Singles: 1st-Paula Murphy of Jacksonville; 2nd-Heather Gordon of Tampa; 3rd-Karen Montalvo of St. Cloud.

Iowa Classic

2nd Chance Blind Draw: 1st-Kevin Jones of Bloomington, Minn., and Terry Becker of Dunkerdon; 2nd-Bob Haft of Brooklyn Park, Minn., and Gerry Ernzen of Waterloo; 3rd-Lane Helgeson of Wyoming, Minn., and Dann Schultz of Cedar Falls.

Scorpion Challenge: 1st-Mitch Weiss of Mason City; 2nd-Drew Long of Waterloo; 3rd-Scott Klees of Cedar Rapids.

Women's Doubles (501): 1st-Katie Kaiser of Booneville and Shae Schroeder of Ankeny; 2nd-Wendy Wernerskirchen and Deb Steffeny, both of Cedar Rapids; 3rd-Rae Lentz of Evansdale and Moe Stricker of Waterloo.

No-Pro Singles: 1st-James Pluff of St. Paul, Minn.; 2nd-Bobby Karpowicz of St. Paul, Minn.; 3rd-David Hale of Des Moines.

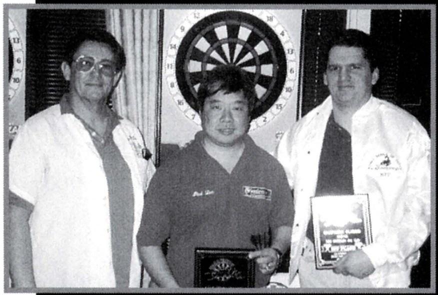
Women's Doubles: 1st-Katie Kaiser of Booneville and Shae Schroeder of Ankeny; 2nd-Donna Gagen and Sue Jostes, both of Des Moines; 3rd-Tricia Pluff of St. Paul, Minn., and Nancy Buckholzt of Crystal, Minn.

Pro Singles: 1st-Lane Helgeson of Wyoming, Minn.; 2nd-Bob Haft of Brooklyn Park, Minn.; 3rd-Steve Shepher of Des Moines.

Open 4-Person: 1st-Lane Helgeson of Wyoming, Minn.; Bob Haft of Brooklyn Park, Minn.; Merel Grack of Glencoe, Minn.; and Kevin Jones of Bloomington, Minn.; 2nd-Troy Murquette, Bill Rottinghaus, Scott Thompson, and JoJo Lentz, all of Waterloo; 3rd-Brad Suarez, Lonnie B., Don Harris, and Larry Davenport, all of Cedar Rapids.

Mixed Triples: 1st-Shae Schroeder of Ankeny, Lane Helgeson of Wyoming, Minn., and Bob Haft of Brooklyn Park, Minn.; 2nd-Nancy Buckholtz and Scott Buckholtz, both of Minneapolis, Minn., and James Pluff of St. Paul, Minn.; 3rd-Donna Gagen,

California Classic No-Pro Singes winner Jesse Sechak (l) and runner up Howard Meyers with Merit's Sabrina Mokuahi.



Cricket & Co.'s Dave Bellina (l) with Pro Doubles winners Paul Lim and Sean Downs in California.

Steve Shepherd, and Roger McCauley, all of Des Moines.

No-Pro Doubles: 1st-James Pluff and Bobby Karpowicz, both of St. Paul, Minn.; 2nd-Mike Stringham and Kasey Kirst, both of Des Moines; 3rd-Merel Grack of Glencoe, Minn., and Kevin Jones of Bloomington, Minn.

Pro Doubles: 1st-Lane Helgeson of Wyoming, Minn., and Bob Haft of Brooklyn Park, Minn.; 2nd-Mitch Weiss of Mason City and P.J. Morris of N. Liberty; 3rd-Ken Kaiser and Steve Shepherd, both of Des Moines.

Women's Singles:1st-Donna Gagen of Des Moines; 2nd-Shae Schroeder of Ankeny; 3rd-Gail Richman of Panora.

Empire State Classic

2nd Chance Blind Draw: 1st-Steve Smead of Naugatuck, Conn., and Bill Herr of Waterbury, Conn.; 2nd-Kim Andreoli of Waterbury, Conn., and Tom Skelton of Troy; 3rd-Missy Poissonnier of Madison, Maine, and Rob Toy of Buffalo.

Scorpion Challenge: 1st-Jason Turbarg of Winsted, Conn.; 2nd-Joe Bruso of Rennsalaer; 3rd-Becky McHenry of Pottsdam.

Women's Doubles (501): 1st-Carolyn Mars of Springfield, Mass, and Connie Sroka of Emaus, Pa.; 2nd-Fran Ginder of Lansdale, Pa., and Kathy Karpowich, Pa.; 3rd-Missy Toy of Buffalo and Maria Fricker of Hatfield, Pa.

No-Pro Singles: 1st-Joe Bruso of Rennsalaer; 2nd-Doug Barcher of Troy; 3rd-Dan Paul of Nassau.

Women's Doubles: 1st-Carolyn Mars of Springfield, Mass., and Connie Sroka of Emaus, Pa.; 2nd-Kathy Karpowich of Freeland, Pa., and Fran Ginder of Lansdale, Pa.; 3rd-Kim Andreoli of Waterbury and Angela Sarbieski of Naugatuck, Conn.

Pro Singles: 1st-Dave Brock of Tonawanda; 2nd-Ed Rebstock of Hatfield, Pa.; 3rd-Dave Albright of Lebanon, Pa.

Open 4-Person: 1st-Tim Kipp of Agawam, Mass.; Charlie Macunas of Higganum, Conn.; Steve Smead of Naugtuck, Conn.; and Vince Lorino of Philadelphia, Pa.; 2nd-Wayne Spratley and Teddy Rice, both of Newark, Dave Brock of Tonawanda, and Rob Melano of Geneva; 3rd-Thom Johnson of Largo, Fla.; Chris Vanzant of New Port Richey, Fla.; and Jim Fink and Bud House, both of Philadelphia, Pa.

Mixed Triples: 1st-Angela Sarbieski and Steve Smead, both of Naugatuck, Conn., and Charlie Macunas of Higganum, Conn.; 2nd-Kathy Karpowich, Mark Starruick, and George Barna, all of Freeland, Pa.; 3rd-Missy Poissonnier of Madison, Maine; Mike Rodas of Buffalo and Jeff Au of Cheektowaga.

No-Pro Doubles: 1st-Doug Barcher of Troy and Joe Bruso of Rennsalaer; 2nd-Dave Andreoli of Waterbury, Conn., and Jay Turbarg of Winsted, Conn.; 3rd-Teddy Rice of Newark and Rob Urbano of Geneva.

Pro Doubles: 1st-Tim Grossman and Burt Van Wie, both of Albany; 2nd-Thom Johnson of Largo, Fla., and Chris Vanzant of New Port Richey, Fla.; 3rd-Wayne Spratley of Newark and Dave Brock of Tonawanda.

Women's Doubles: 1st-Kathy Karpowich of Freeland, Pa.; 2nd-Carolyn Mars of Springfield, Mass.; 3rd-Connie Sroka of Emaus, Pa.

Aloha Classic

Draw Doubles: 1st-Paipai Falemalu of Kaaawa and Steve Ruff of Plainfield, Ind.; 2nd-Jody Baguio of Wahiawa and Alyn Harding of Port Richey, Fla.; 3rd-Bernie Roney of Granger, Ind., and Jose Vega of Wahiawa.

Women's Singles: 1st-Narcesa Fukuda of Wahiawa; 2nd-Oi Allen of Wahiawa; 3rd-Grace Rio of Honolulu.

Women's Doubles (501): 1st-Lisa Peralta of Waipahu and Jeanine Colbert of Honolulu; 2nd-Phina Kaeka of Waianae and Reiko Palakiko of Kaimuki; 3rd-Maria Uele and Susie Mordica, both of Honolulu.

No-Pro Singles: 1st-Paipai Falemalu of Kaaawa; 2nd-Robert Eum of Wahiawa; 3rd-Ross Gushiken of Hilo.

Women's Doubles (501/Cricket): 1st-Kanoe Ching and Stephanie Paseo, both of Wahiawa; 2nd-Phina Kaeka of Wahiawa and Lorrie Horiuchi of Waipahu; 3rd-Grace Rio and Kanoe Makaena, both of Honolulu.

Pro Singles: 1st-Joey Smith of Mobile, Ala.; 2nd-Colin Sim of Honolulu; 3rd-Steve Ruff of Plainfield, Ind.

Open 4-Person: 1st-Jarrett Ho, Colin Sim, Ken Asada, all of Honolulu, and Paipai Falemalu of Kaaawa; 2nd-Bernie Roney of Granger, Ind.; Kevin Colvin of South Bend, Ind.; Steve Ruff of Plainfield, Ind.; and Andy Bass of Indianapolis, Ind.; 3rd-Willy Wong and Kendall Yu, both of Honolulu, and Joey Smith and Larry Blancett, both of Mobile, Ala.

Mixed Triples: 1st-Mae Smith, Joey Smith, and Larry Blancett, all of Mobile, Ala.; 2nd-Trina Ishiki, Mitchell Phillips, and Bill Needham, all of Kailua; 3rd-Kanoe Makaena of Honolulu, Alyn Harding of New Port Richey, Fla., and Paul Jaeger of Honolulu.

No-Pro Doubles: 1st-Mitchell Phillips and Bill Needham, both of Kailua; 2nd-Kendall Yu of Honolulu and Larry Blancett of Mobile, Ala.; 3rd-Colin Sim of Honolulu and Doug Kamae of Wahiawa; 2nd-Alyn Harding of Port Richey, Fla., and Bernie Roney of Granger, Ind.; 3rd-Steve Ruff of Planfield, Ind., and Doug Griffith of Indianapolis, Ind. ▲

TRADE ACCESSORIES

CRSH2000

Tellus Business Services introduces the new CRSH2000, a software program that will test PC hardware to see if it is millenium compliant. It will test to make sure the BIOS clock updates properly on Dec. 31, 1999. It will also test the PC to see if the year 2000 will save when the PC is turned off.

The program will run on systems that are using DOS, Windows 3.1, Windows 3.1, and Windows 95. It will take control of the system and automatically make the necessary tests. The test results are displayed as they are determined and written to an ASCII file on the system disc. The results can then be displayed or printed with an ASCII editor such as Notepad.

For more information, contact Tellus Business Service, (816)765-3885; fax (816)765-3301; e-mail (telux@tfs.net); Web site (http://www.tfs.net/~telus/year2000.htm).

Contact East catalog

Contact East has published a new 64-page update catalog loaded with the latest in test instruments and tools for security managers, service engineers, installers, technicians, and electricians. The catalog features quality products from brand name manufacturers for testing, repairing, and installing electrical and electronic equipment.

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Star*Tech Journal on CD-ROM

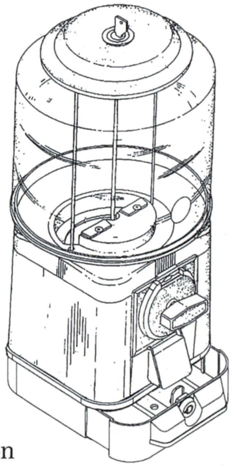
*Star*Tech Journal* recently announced its newest release on CD-ROM for both PC and Macintosh. Every page published in the last three years, 36 issues, plus indexes are available for fast information retrieval. Keyword searches are capable for any topic, as well as page links, screen sizing, zoom, and printing options.

Also available on CD-ROM are the Coin-Op Pinball Repair and Maintenance release, focusing on all pinball games manufactured during the past 10 years with game-specific fixes and modifications, and the Servicing Video Games and Monitors CD. Included in the pinball CD are 500 separate articles with symptoms, solutions, changes, updates, precautions, and troubleshooting tips. The CD-ROM focusing on game monitors addresses black-and-white and color units, both low and high resolution.

For more information, contact *Star*Tech Journal,* (609)654-5544; fax (609)654-1441; e-mail (info@ StarTechJournal.com).

RB 16 Cash Drawer

Machine-O-Matic introduces the RB16 Cash Drawer, which will allow operators to service more machines in less time with less effort. By including this drawer, operators will no longer have to remove the service head to retrieve cash.



By undoing the lid to replenish the product and unlocking the bottom drawer, the money can be removed. No more lifting the service heads off the center rod; no more chasing coins around in the base; no more trying to line up the center hole on the service head with the center rod.

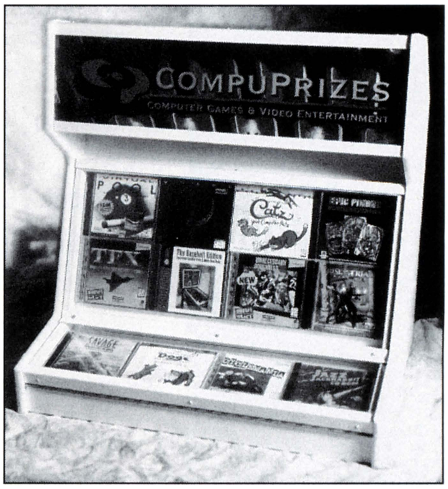
This separate cash drawer is a black, powder-coated, zinc die casting, which is available in two different versions: one with and one without a spill tray. This drawer smoothly glides out of the base to enable the easy removal of cash. The tubular lock on this drawer can be keyed the same as, or differently than the lid lock on the RB machine.

As an optional item, this drawer can be purchased for a nominal cost with an RB16 machine. It is also possible to convert an existing unit. Conversion kits will include a new base, the sliding cash drawer, a center rod, and a tubular lock. Both versions of the tray have the capacity to hold 400 quarters.

For more information, contact Machine-O-Matic, (905)836-4700 or (800)265-6772; fax (905)836-4737; e-mail (sales@beavervending.com); Web site (http://www. beavervending.com).

Compuprizes

Compuprizes USA introduces one of the newest trends in prize redemption, its Compuprizes vendor that offers FECs the chance to attract the next generation of customers who are drawn to content-based product prizes for their personal computers.



The unit includes a display case, sliding glass lock assembly with two keys, one full color header, one counter bolt, 12 empty display CDs with full color inserts, two bubble wrapped glass sliding doors, a pre-installed fluorescent light switch, and an assembly instruction sheet.

Compuprizes comes equipped with CD-ROMs featuring hit consumer games, video movies, and virtual pets. Content is offered for both PCs and Apple computers.

For more information, contact Compuprizes USA, (888) 773-7225; e-mail (sales@compuprizes. com); Web site (http:// www.compuprizes.com). ▲

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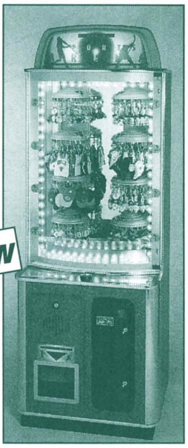

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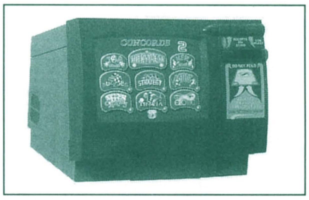

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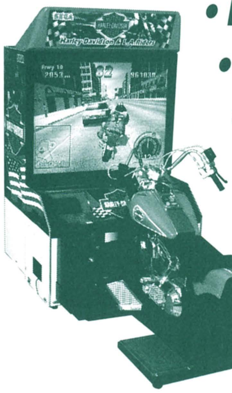

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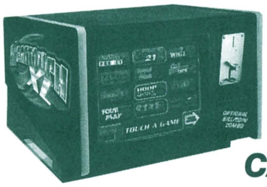

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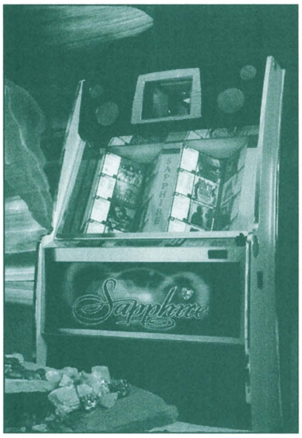

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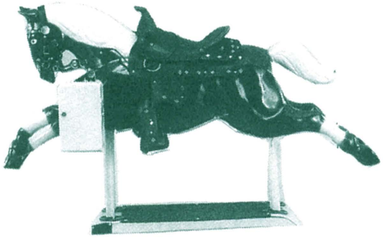

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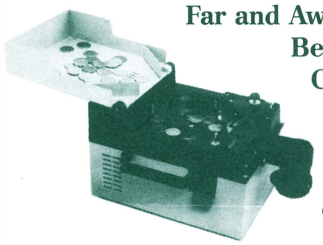

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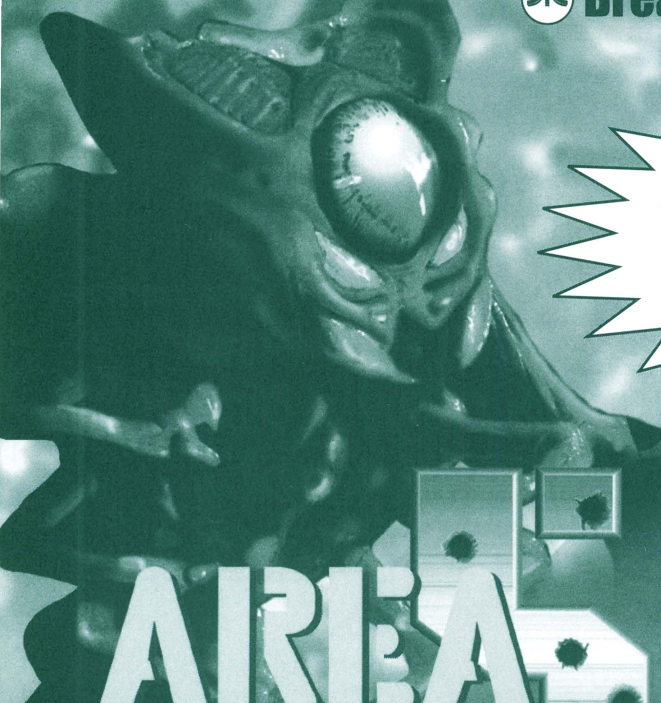

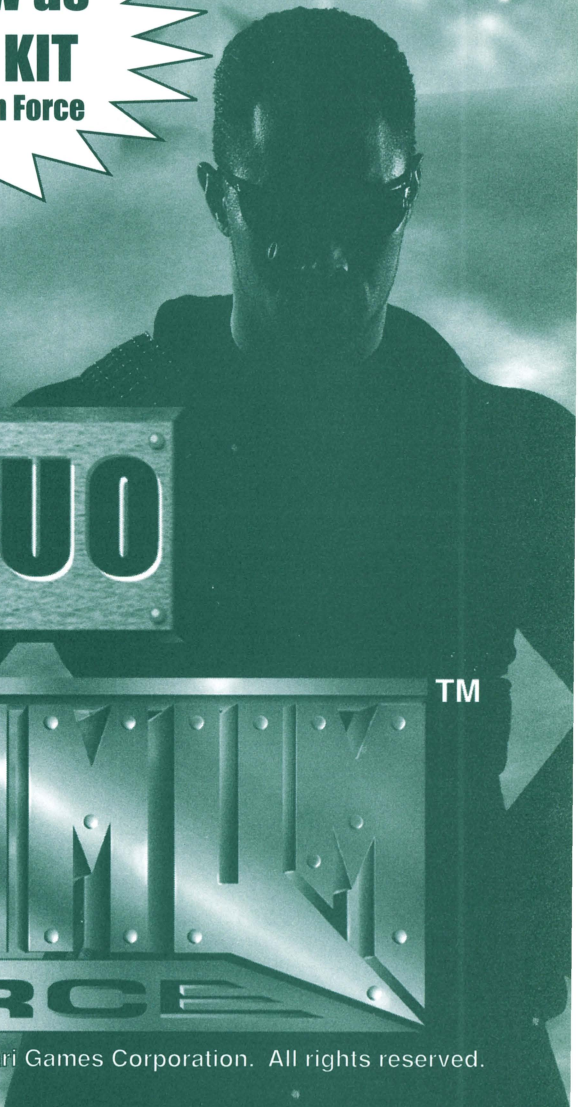

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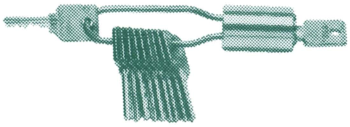

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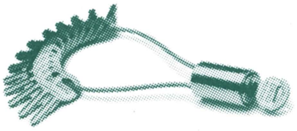

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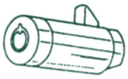

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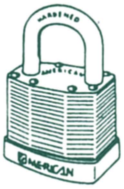

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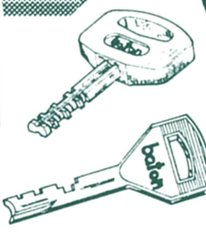

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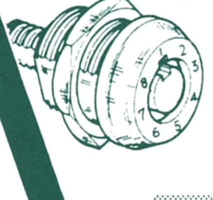

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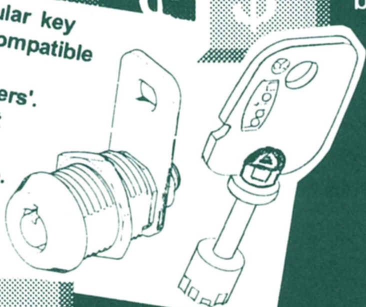

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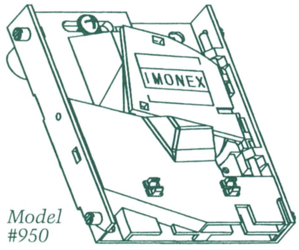

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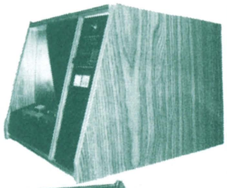

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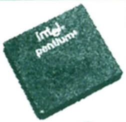

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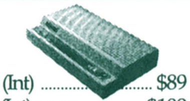

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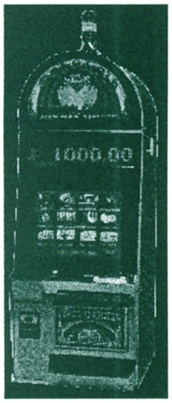

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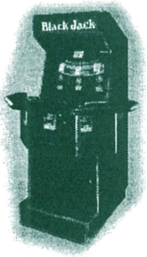

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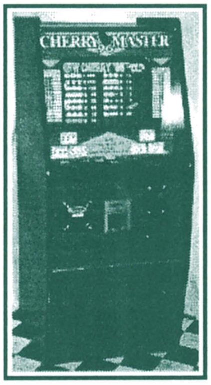

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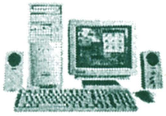

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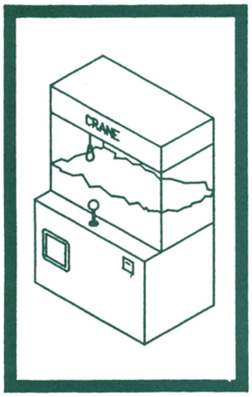

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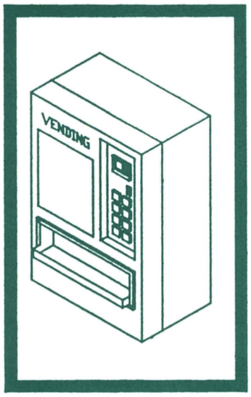

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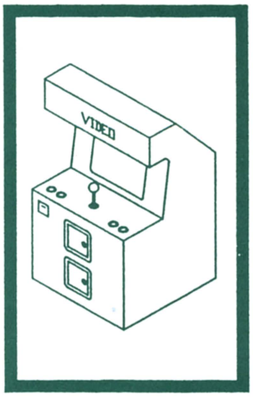

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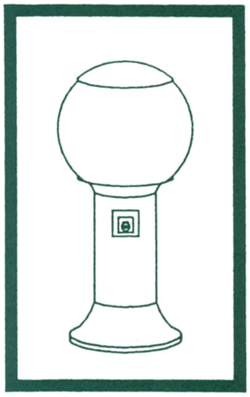

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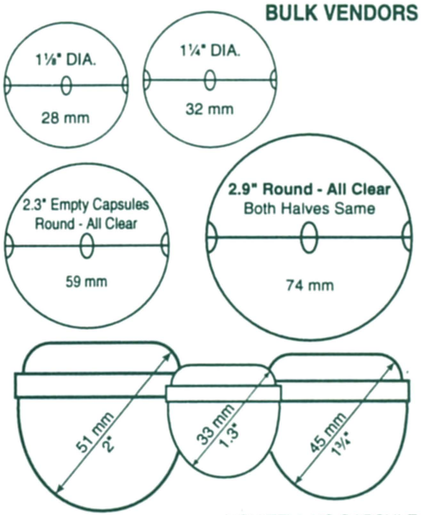

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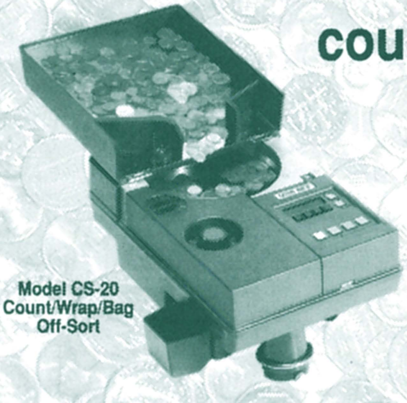

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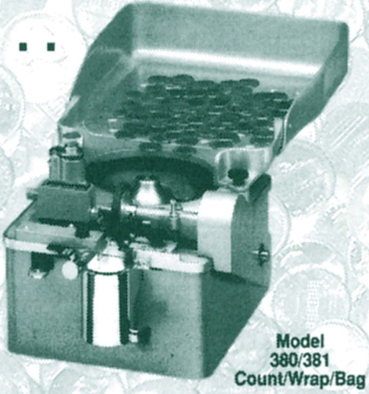

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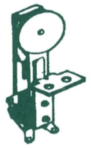

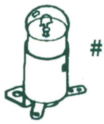

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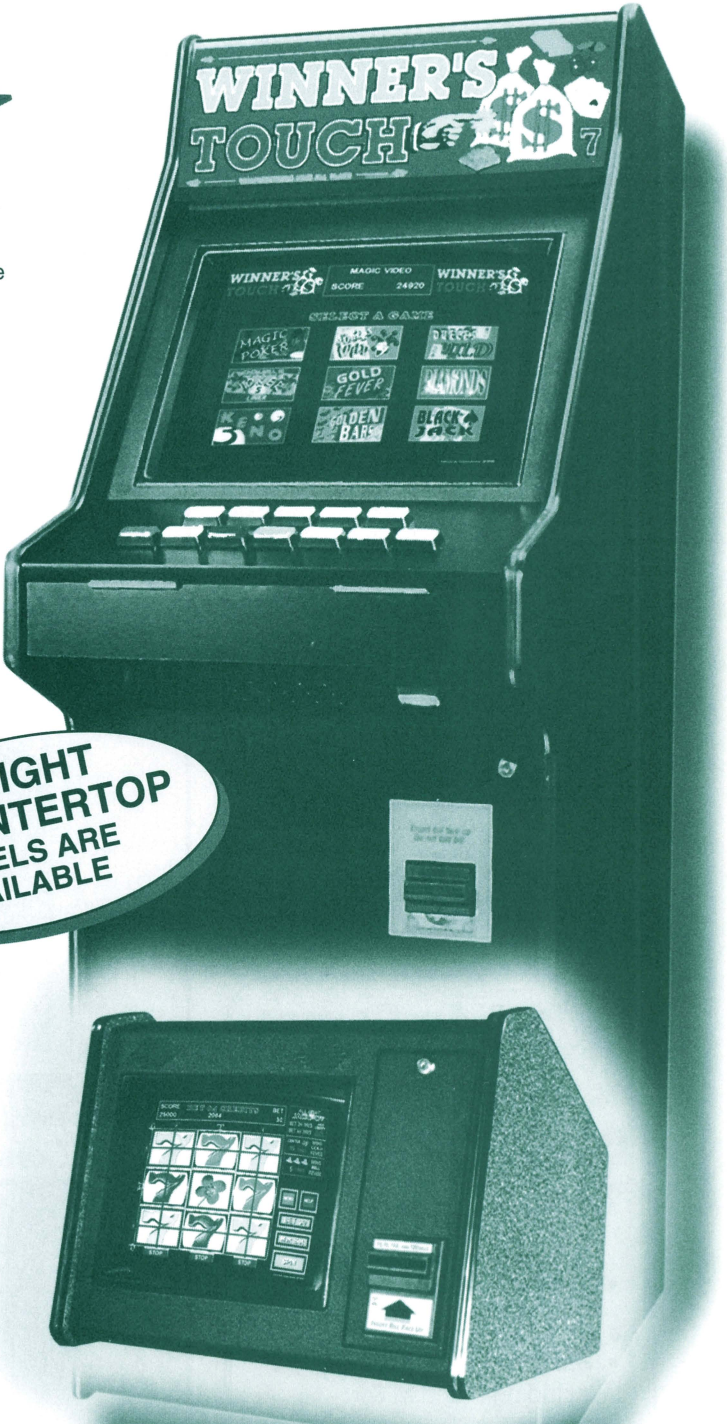
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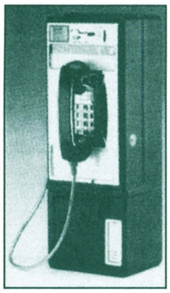

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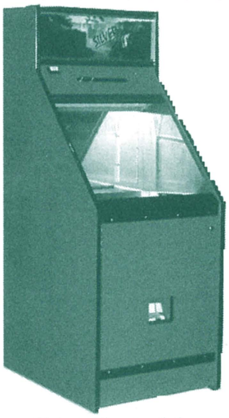

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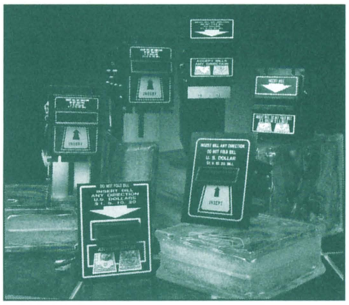

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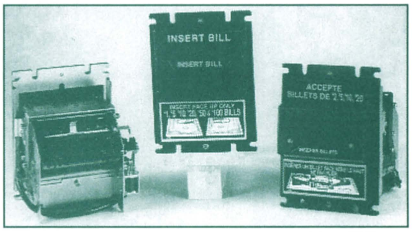

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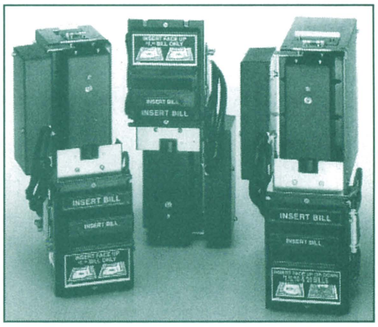

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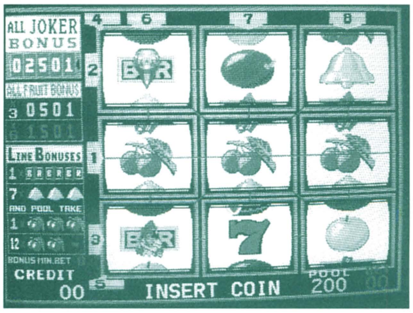

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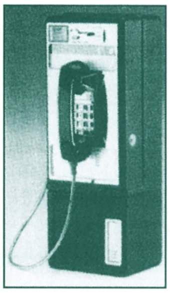

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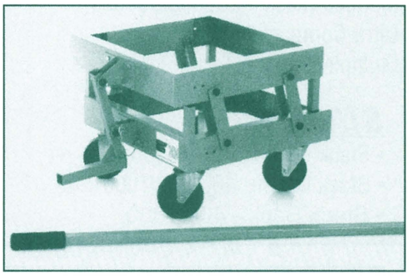

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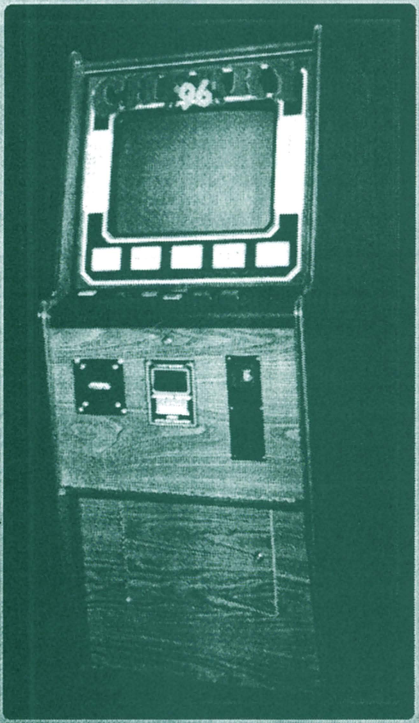

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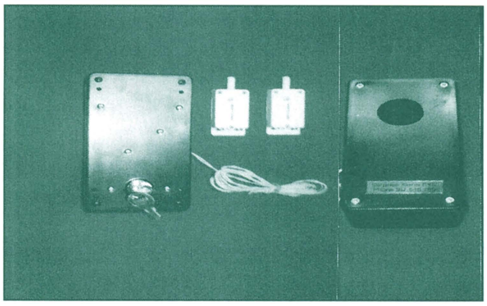

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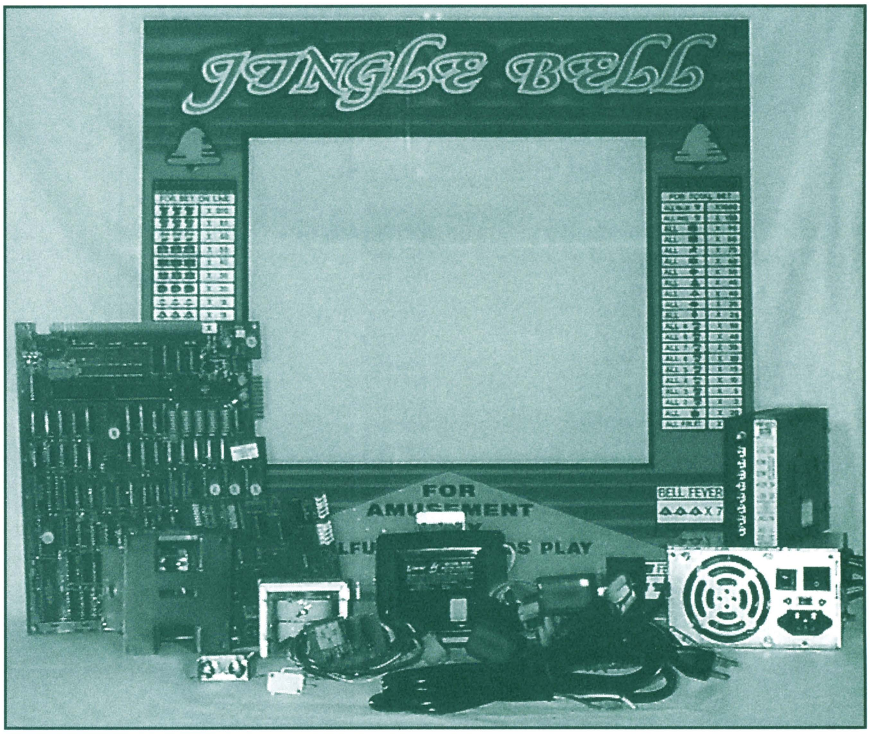

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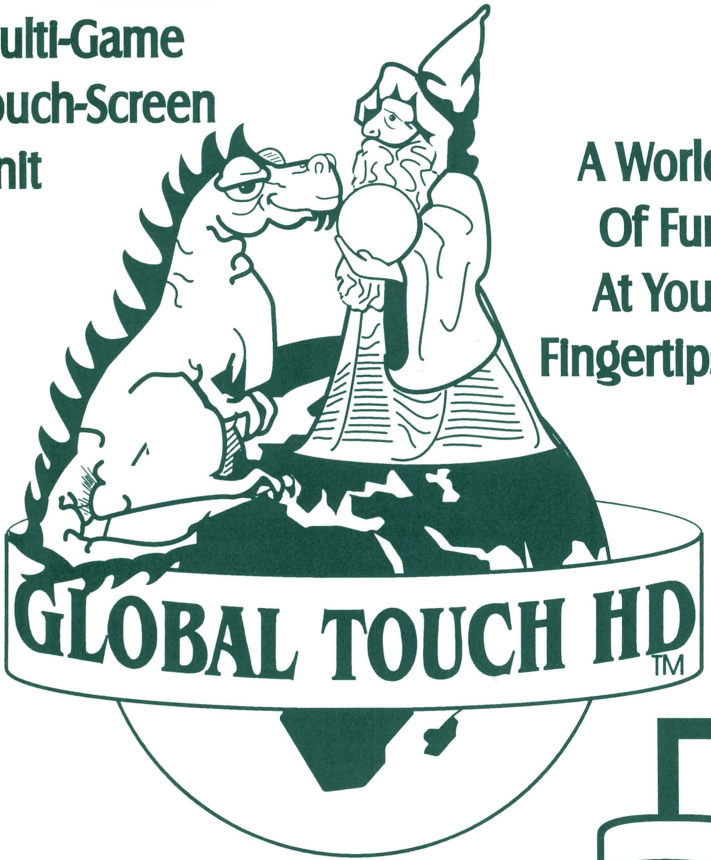

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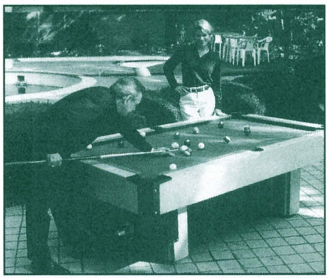

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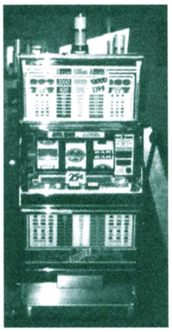

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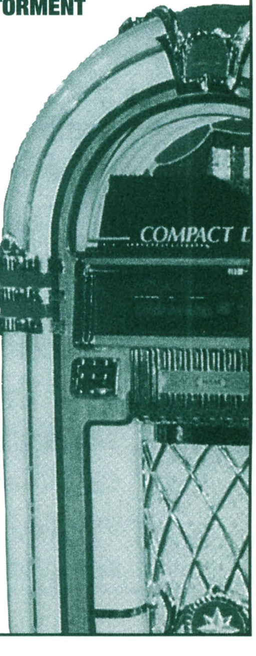

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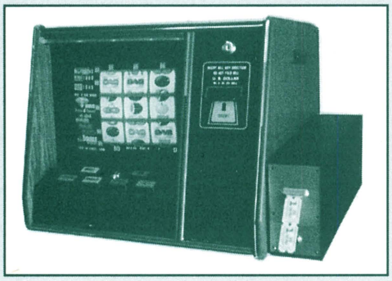

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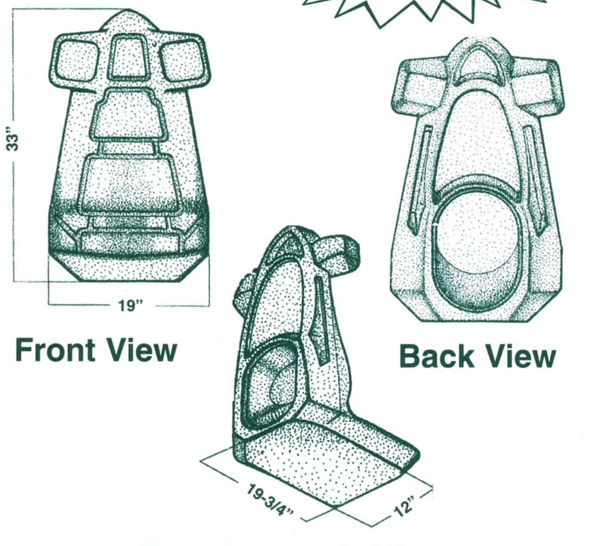

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JUNE 25-27
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JULY 17-19
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AUGUST 6-9
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AUGUST 13-14
OCMA Expo '98, Holiday Inn East, Columbus, Ohio. Call (614)888-9772; fax (614)888-9767.

AUGUST 13-15
WyWCOA Convention, Jackson Hole Resort Hotel and Conference Center, Teton Village near Jackson, Wyo. Call (307)635-8524; fax (307)635-1911.

SEPTEMBER 17-19
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OCTOBER 15-17
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For overseas events see "International Scene" (pp. 159).

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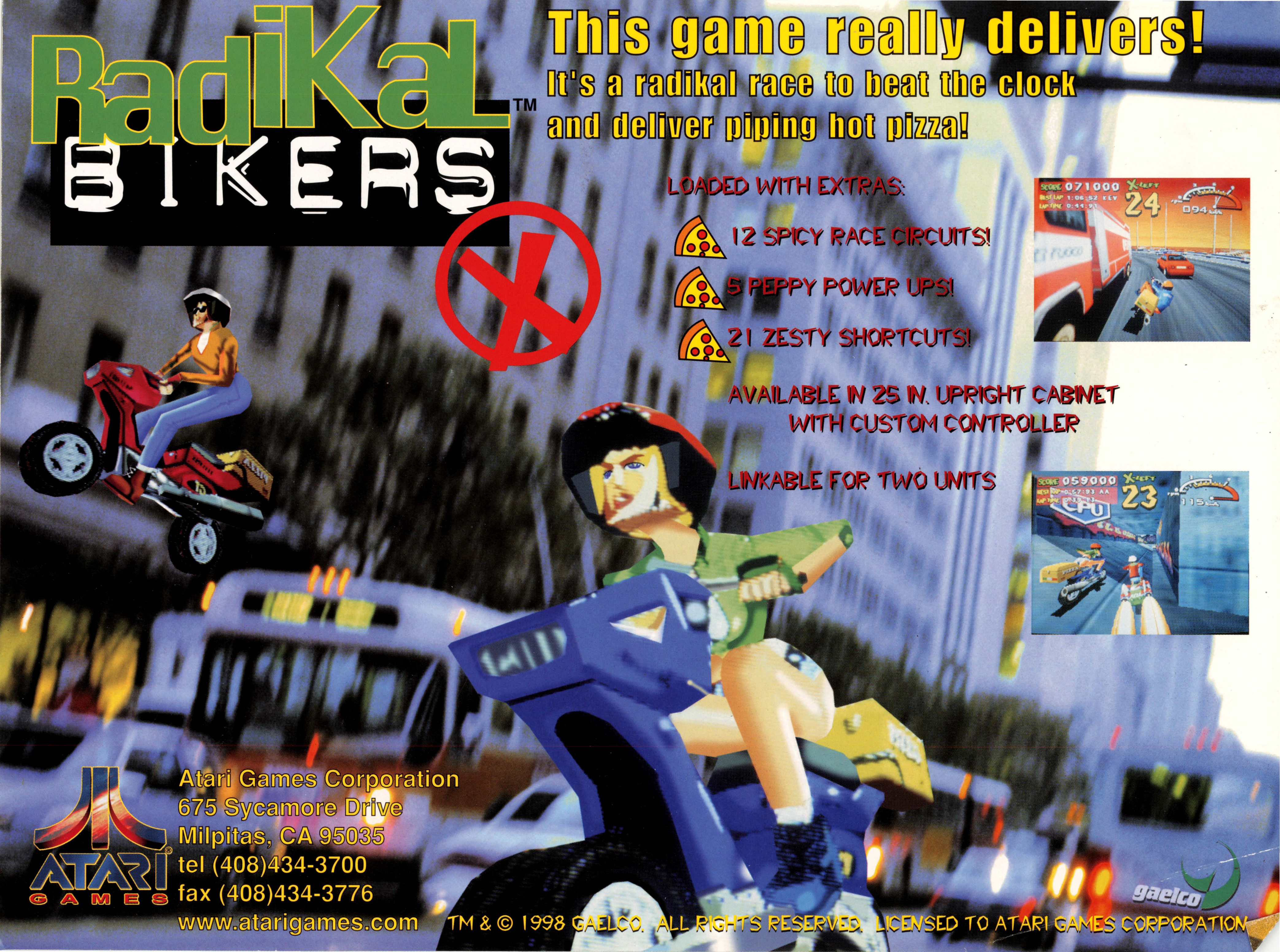
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